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THE NEW

# STATESMAN AND NATION

## The Week-end Review

Vol. XXI. No. 518 [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1941 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

MAR 10 1941

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## THE SLIPPERY SLOPE?

The good news of the capture of Tobruk and the great issues involved in the debate on man power did not, we are glad to notice, persuade M.P.s altogether to overlook the importance of the Government's decision to suppress the *Daily Worker* and the *Week*, under Defence Regulation 2D. The matter is to be discussed shortly in the House. It is raised on the issue of procedure. Expressing the general "detestation" of the policy of the *Daily Worker*, the motion regrets that action has been taken under a Regulation that the House only reluctantly agreed to accept because Sir John Anderson argued that the Government might need such a special power to stop subversive propaganda if the Nazis were actually on our shores. Among those who strongly opposed this Regulation in the House on July 31st, 1940, were members of all parties, including Commander King-Hall, Mr. Kenneth Lindsay, Sir George Hume and Mr. Noel-Baker.

Home Secretaries naturally prefer a summary procedure, which avoids delay and public argument, and the fact that the *Daily Worker* has been "asking for" suppression strengthens Mr. Morrison's hand. But it is not always wise to give people what they ask for. The case against the *Daily Worker* is, of course, overwhelming. We believe that if this island is invaded the majority of Communists would, in fact, seize hammers and sickles to drive the invader from our shores. But the official Communist policy appears to be that of "revolutionary defeatism" in circumstances in which Lenin, the great exponent of that doctrine, would never, we believe, have preached it. It is indisputable that the *Daily Worker* has "systematically published matter calculated to foment opposition to the prosecution of the war to a successful issue." "Objectively," to use a favourite Communist idiom, Communist propaganda aids Fascism. Mr. Morrison is therefore in a position to urge that he is not, by suppressing the *Daily Worker*, attacking the liberty of the press, which remains free to criticise the Government as sharply as it pleases.

The disadvantages of suppression remain. It has been our proud boast that even in so desperate a struggle as this Britain has been strong enough to tolerate the free expression of the most extreme opinions. The reasons for abandoning that tolerance are not altogether obvious. There is no evidence of sabotage, though there is evidence of factory propaganda designed to lower production. For the most part, Communism lives on the exploitation of grievances; often grievances urged in the *Daily Worker* have been taken up later by other papers. Some of the delegates at the People's Convention appear to have been unaware that they were supporting a policy of "revolutionary defeatism": the majority seem to have been Communists who had arranged by various methods to be in a position to claim a representative character which was fictitious and which their fellow-workers in many cases repudiated. It is extremely dubious whether the suppression of the *Daily Worker* and the *Week* will lessen their activities. As the *Daily Mirror*, alone among the daily newspapers, pointed out, the effect is likely to be to make martyrs of Communists and to strengthen their underground work. To suppress the Communist press is not to suppress Communism; indeed, it is part of the Communist case that a time comes in capitalist society when Communism appears the only alternative to reaction, and that when that time comes Communism will grow in strength—all the more if reaction is exemplified in suppression. We fear that Mr. Morrison, whose sincerity in these matters is above question and whose desire to preserve civil liberty is, we believe, as strong as our own, may find that he has taken the first step on a slippery slope down which some of his less enlightened colleagues and advisers may rejoice to push him. Nothing would so please the reactionary forces that exist in this country, as to see Labour Ministers doing for them the work of repression, which would lead to a popular outcry if carried out by Conservatives. We can all name some of those who will rejoice if Mr. Morrison can be put into the position of the man who, from the best motives, whittles away our liberties, while Mr. Bevin, again from the best motives, is led to the use of compulsory powers over Labour without being able effectively to apply compulsion to property. There is another and better method. These are great times

which demand great measures. Small acts of repression will not allay discontent. To remove the basic causes of discontent is the remedy. The Government has not fulfilled the promise of great social change implied in its declaration of last May. The effect of that declaration was electric; it was the one effective blow struck so far at subversive propaganda. That propaganda will grow as long as Britain remains, as it is to-day, a nation of glaring and indefensible inequality. Members of the Government have talked much of a "people's war"; if they themselves provide that leadership which in social matters is now lacking in the factory and workshop, they will not need to bother their heads any more about Communism or Communist newspapers.

### Whose Mediterranean?

The fall of Tobruk, for some time a certainty, the recapture of Kasala and the advance into Eritrea, where the British initiative comes as something of a surprise, the signs of effective moves in Abyssinia—all these form a highly encouraging story of British initiative in Africa. The surrender of Italian prisoners is on a significant scale, and it would be reasonable to expect that the Italian Empire, left to Italian defence, would now crumble, and to speculate on the effects in Italy and on the possible termination of Mussolini's dictatorship. That dictatorship is now doomed, for Hitler is in effect taking it over. We may assume that Hitler wasted no time in congratulating or condoling with the Duce at their meeting this week. It was a business meeting. Hitler takes over the command. He will use the German air arm to threaten British communications in the Mediterranean. Malta, supposed before the war to be vulnerable to Italian air attack, has only now become dangerous as a result of German bombing. We must assume in the next months both a terrific effort on the part of the Nazis to make good their ferocious threats at this island by sea and by air, and possibly by land attacks. We know that this will be accompanied by a more vigorous offensive in the Mediterranean which cannot now be Italian, but which will, if Hitler gets his way, be German. Our immediate object must be the defeat of the German threat: our future objective should be to make "Mare Nostrum" an international highway.

### Mr. Roosevelt's Third Term

Mr. Roosevelt, in entering upon his third term, has assumed a great task at home and, it must be emphasised, a still greater world responsibility. He stands with Mr. Churchill as a proof that democracy can produce leaders of vigour and toughness to stand against the dictators. We hope they will outmatch the dictators not only in toughness, but in vision. Now, as in 1917, the hopes of freedom-loving people all over the world will be centred on the President of the United States; a second disillusionment would be a colossal disaster for mankind. We hope that before he becomes absorbed in the overwhelming task of military preparation Mr. Roosevelt will lay down unequivocal peace aims which in their international application reflect the vision and generosity which has inspired his domestic policy. Mr. Churchill, perhaps because he drives a mixed team, has again declined to state Britain's war aims; possibly the matter is under discussion with Mr. Harry Hopkins who, it is suggested, may be seeking, as Colonel House sought in the last war, to find a mind in Europe that can see beyond the immediate urgency of the national issues. Mr. Roosevelt has reaffirmed his faith in the mission of democracy and his confidence in its power of survival. Not all the people who associate themselves with this fight for democracy mean by it the same things that Mr. Roosevelt means. We know that on this side of the Atlantic. Mr. Roosevelt and our leaders must so act now that neither Congress nor Parliament are filled after the war with the hard-faced men who cheated the peoples last time.

### Fire Fighting

The brutal facts of total war, the logic of war in which civilians are the front line, are being slowly but inescapably brought home to this nation. Under the new Defence Regulations part-time service in any branch of Civil Defence may be imposed on all civilians of both sexes between the ages of 16 and 60. For the present, however, the compulsion to serve will be restricted to fire-fighting and will apply to men only. Schemes of fire prevention will be made obligatory in any areas scheduled by the Regional Commissioners and every type of building is to be covered. Where voluntary arrangements are regarded as inadequate by the responsible authorities compulsory service will be imposed. The question arises whether any properly co-ordinated scheme will develop under the multiplicity of responsible authorities superintending what in many cases must be crude and amateur arrangements. The Admiralty and the Ministries of Supply and Aircraft Production will be responsible for war factories; the Ministry of Transport for railways, canals, and docks; and the appropriate Government departments for public utility companies. Other factories employing more than 30 people will come under the Ministry of Labour. Local authorities will be responsible for the smaller factories, commercial premises, shops, dwelling-houses, churches, theatres, cinemas, and all miscellaneous buildings, including houses and other buildings which are unoccupied. The principle that the householder must keep the home fires from burning seems inescapable. There are unfortunately, difficulties about its application. The additional burden will fall mainly on people, who precisely because they are living in danger areas are already harassed by problems of work and living. The local application of compulsion again lets out the well-to-do refugees who, as the *Times* has pointed out, can afford to load up a car with food and comforts and take themselves off to remote and safe parts of these islands. Further, we suggest that as far as practicable the responsibility for defence in front-line areas should be laid on the disciplined organisation of the Army. We cannot afford many more disasters arising from inexperienced and amateur methods. The War Office has in our view taken too narrow a view of military training in this war; fire-fighting to save their homes and relatives would be welcomed by soldiers and provide an important part of training for a war which does not conform to the traditional pattern of the battlefield. To some extent this principle has now been admitted; in one town at least posses of soldiers prevented a great disaster. On the other hand, we could not suggest that the main task of fire-spotting and the initial duty of putting out the incendiary bomb before it takes hold, can be work for soldiers. The immediate solution would seem to be to adopt the Government's scheme for making the initial prevention of fire a civilian obligation, with the important addition that soldiers should be kept ready in every town to fight fires which civilian energy has not been able to prevent.

### Economic Notes (*by an Industrial Correspondent*)

Why on earth is fish omitted from the new price-control orders? Fish and poultry prices are now prohibitive to the main body of consumers, and provide the chief means whereby the richer classes can keep up their standards of consumption while other people are going short. No doubt, merely to fix prices without rationing would result in these goods being sold to "best customers" only, and in their virtual disappearance from the general market. But the remedy for this is rationing as well as price-control—by inclusion with the meat ration, or in a new category, as may seem best. Ordinary people will not long put up with the existing food conditions unless they are convinced that broadly the limitation is the same for all.

* * *

Some further thoughts, beyond those made in the editorial column last week, are suggested by the results of the Ministry of Labour's enquiry into working-class budgets. Of course, the outstanding points are the fall in expenditure on food from 60 to 40 per cent. of the total, and the rise of the miscellaneous items from 4 to nearly 30 per cent. The fall in food costs is closely related to the decrease in the number of children, as well as to the sharp (pre-war) reduction in the relative cost of food. There is no doubt at all that, in a material sense, it costs the workers very dear to bring up a family. In fact, the case for family allowances is very greatly strengthened by the results of the enquiry. The larger households must be either going badly short of food, or practically doing without most of the conventional necessaries. I suspect that they go for the most part short of food, even according to wartime standards of consumption. For in fact it cannot be easy, under present-day conditions of living, to economise greatly on the "miscellaneous" items of expenditure. Out of the total of 25*s.* 7*d.* a week spent on "miscellaneous" living costs by the average household, nearly 7*s.* 6*d.* is accounted for by medical expenses, insurances, and trade union contributions. 4*s.* 1*d.* is for soap and

household equipment, and 6½*d.* for laundry. 2*s.* 3*d.* is for travel, apart from holidays, and 6½*d.* for hairdressing. These items total nearly 15*s.*, leaving only about half-a-guinea for everything else. The items on which it is presumably more possible to economise are holidays (7¾*d.*, or £1 13*s.* 7*d.* a year for the family as a whole), drink (9¼*d.*, or £2 a year), tobacco (2*s.* 6½*d.*, or £6 6*s.* a year), entertainments (1*s.* 4½*d.*, or £3 11*s.* 6*d.* a year) and newspapers (1*s.*, or £2 12*s.*)

* * *

The high cost of medical services and insurances—over 6*s.* a week, without allowing for Trade Union contributions—is one very significant fact brought out by the enquiry. Over 2*s.* of this is virtually tax—for what else are the compulsory contributions to health, unemployment, and pensions insurance? Over and above the requisite tax for N.H.I., the average working-class household have to spend 1*s.* 8*d.* a week on medical services; and "other insurances" cost it 2*s.* 4½*d.* Out of this last sum are drawn the high profits and wasteful costs of industrial life insurance, which could be run very much more cheaply by the State, as the Fabian Society long ago, and Sir Arnold Wilson and Professor Levy more recently, have demonstrated beyond a doubt. As for holidays, the institution of "holidays with pay" will doubtless cause the very poor to take more holidays, but will not give them any more income for the purpose; for at present, as the figures show, they work instead of holiday-making—when work is to be had. Travel costs, of course, bear very differently upon different households, and so does rent: and accordingly the "average" has not a great deal of meaning. But the very poor cannot save much on travel, which depends on the necessities of their jobs; and if they try to save on rent, they can do so only at a social cost quite as serious as shortage of food.

* * *

In fact, though the fall in food expenditure as a proportion of total income does undoubtedly mean that the average standard of living has risen, the changes of the past thirty years have actually made things harder for the large families, because the "miscellaneous" costs of living have risen in ways that are largely unavoidable. Even a modern scheme of family allowances would clearly bring with it an immense increase in happiness and well-being; and the case for it, under war conditions especially, is so strong that it is difficult to see how even the combined opposition of employers and Trade Union leaders can stand out much longer against it.

Family allowances, however, are inextricably mixed up with wage-policy. Urgent jobs still cannot be manned because wages for less important jobs are considerably higher, or because men would lose wages by moving from one district to another. Serious hold-ups of production at critical points are still due to local labour shortages which it is difficult to remedy because of wage-differences; and earnings up and down the country still bear no relation to the value of the job, or the hardships or dangers attaching to it, or to anything else that can be called a principle. A wage-policy is the indispensable complement to any new policy designed to distribute man-power to better national advantage.

* * *

But, for the moment, the food problem is the most serious of all. Frankly, we do not believe the Food Minister when he attributes the present confusion to the diversion of shipping for the supply of our forces in Africa. This may be a contributory factor; but it can hardly be a large one. The truth is that stocks were recklessly dissipated during the second half of last year, after the fall of France, and that in a number of cases the possessors of potential supplies (e.g. fat cattle) are now holding these back in the hope of improved terms. Local distribution, too, is a chaos; and the unofficial rationing of supplies through the traders works out most unfairly as between richer and poorer customers. Nor is it at all clear that the import of food is being given its rightful place in the allocation of shipping space. For example, are foodstuffs being used to the same extent as in the later stages of the last war as a "fill-up" for other cargoes, so as to ensure that no vessel leaves the United States with any of its space unused? The Government would do well to give serious thought to the food problem. What creates dangerous discontent is far less actual shortage than the belief that, through graft or incompetence or vested interests, the available supplies are not being fairly distributed, either between areas or between individual purchasers.

**Man Power and Production Debate** (*from a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

The decision to debate man power and production in public instead of secret session has been amply vindicated. No indiscreet speeches calculated to help the enemy were made and yet discussion was full, frank and critical. The House performed its dual function of guiding public opinion and expressing the disquiet widely felt at the inadequacy of our war effort on the economic front.

Mr. Bevin's speech was not successful. He had not succeeded in welding into a satisfactory whole the departmental briefs with which he had been supplied. In a strong speech Shinwell declared that there was no sign in the Minister's speech of that clear analysis, unified policy and explicit explanation of how the Government proposed to convert our present partial mobilisation of labour and material (which he put at 60 per cent. or 70 per cent.) into full mobilisation for the war effort. Bevin spoke of industrial registration by age groups from which no one would be exempt, but he gave no indication of any scheme of compensation that must accompany a general calling up for service in the munition industries.

But the serious question that arose from Bevin's speech was this: Has Bevin turned a somersault and dished the Labour Party by protesting against compulsion and then introducing compulsion of labour in its most stringent form without real safeguards, planning and compulsion of property? His proposal that in certain types of vital work no employee will be allowed to leave without the permission of National Service Officers smacks of the "leaving certificates" which caused so much trouble in the last war. Hardship tribunals to which the workers may appeal will be set up, and he balances the proposal by taking the right of dismissal out of the hands of employers except for misconduct—which is a very elastic phrase.

By his reference to the probable calling up of the age groups over 36 and of the "19s" Bevin gave the House the impression that a substantial increase in the size of the Army was contemplated. He said men would only be called up as equipment was available for them. Shinwell received support on all sides of the House when he asked how many men were required for the Army, in view of the limitations set by equipment and the shortage of ships for carrying them to overseas theatres of war. Our primary need is not a large expansion of the Army but more planes and ships.

After urging that Bevin was in fact being compelled to move towards the worst forms of compulsion by lack of any co-ordinate industrial plan, Clement Davies devoted his main attack to the structure of the Governmental machine. There was lack of policy in Department after Department, due to lack of individual responsibility and decision. This was due to the Committee system, which in the past the Prime Minister had condemned. A better structure would be a small War Cabinet with no executive duties, under them five principal Ministers of State who would have powers of decision over the Ministries allotted to them. The Defence Minister, for example, would have the three Service Ministries under his control.

The Prime Minister replied to this point in the fighting speech with which he wound up the debate. He defended his decision not to have a War Cabinet of Ministers freed from departmental responsibilities on the grounds that important departmental Ministers such as the Minister of Labour, who brought the good will of the masses with him, and the Minister of Aircraft Production should be directly represented. The great Departments of State had to be carried with the Cabinet because they possessed "irresistible power based on a systematic and organised body of opinion." From his experience in the last war he believed that Committees composed of the executive heads of the Departments concerned reached agreement quickly.

On the pace of our production effort the Prime Minister said that the size of the Army was planned on the outbreak of war. That planned size had not been altered except that ten divisions had been added to it. Factories had been then laid down to provide that Army with all the armaments and munitions it would require if engaged in continuous battle in Europe. Most of those factories were now three-quarters or four-fifths finished. As they were completed during the next few months their demands on man power and woman power would provide our major problem.

The House remained distinctly uneasy both about Government organisation and the pace of our production effort. The Prime Minister, by his intervention, has caused most Members to suspend judgment and wait for results. To be effective in the coming battle those results must be quickly forthcoming. The fundamental question emerging from this debate is whether the size of the Army should be replanned to take account of the changed strategical situation. Can we use an Army of much more than two million?

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# EVIL PROPAGANDA

IN this war against what are we fighting? Is the enemy the German race or is it Fascism? The question became urgent since Sir Robert Vansittart published as a pamphlet* his broadcast talks addressed to Americans. A more whole-hearted hymn of hate has seldom been written in better English. Unfortunately, it is more than an autobiographical confession. The author was the permanent head of the Foreign Office, and he is still "Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the British Government." His opinions have been placed before American citizens with the hall-mark of the B.B.C., and in due course they will reach the enemy, whose propagandists could desire no material better suited to their purpose. In the meanwhile, with all the rest of the world, we are left to conjecture with what aims in view our Government is fighting this war. On that mystery Sir Robert sheds no light. But he does try to deflect into the channel of racial hatred the emotions that should inspire us in this struggle. He has, moreover, his diagnosis of what has been wrong with Europe for a couple of generations—not the anarchy of rival national States, not the chaos of our planless economic life, not the power-lust of Fascism, but merely the congenital barbarism of the German race. From a settlement based in this mood on that diagnosis may our good genius guard us.

Sir Robert tells us, rather naively, that his repugnance towards everything German dates from his own experiences as a schoolboy in Prussia at the end of the last century. It was the period of the Jameson Raid and the Boer War, and Germans often voiced their disapproval with gross discourtesy. This led him to a highly selective study of German history over a period of two thousand years. He quotes Tacitus, forgetting that the Germans he described (on the whole with admiration) were as much our ancestors as Hitler's. He dwells on twelfth-century iniquities as still significant. Certainly the Teutonic knights suppressed a Slav language when they could, and ill-used the Jews. Our forefathers rooted out the Irish language and swept such Jews as survived out of this island. He dwells on von Trotha's brutal slaughter of the Herreros: has he ever read the record of the total extermination of the Tasmanian natives? He reminds us of Tilly's massacre at Magdeburg. Has he ever studied Cromwell's contemporary record in Ireland? Bismarck's three wars are a proper subject for reproach, if anything is to be gained by a retrospective wrangle. But even here he is grossly inaccurate. Bismarck did not "forge" the Ems despatch: what he did was to publish a summary of it, which made an unconciliatory document seem appreciably more offensive than in fact it was. Nor did Bismarck ever say that "all problems" must be solved by "blood and iron." That was his prescription for Germany's unification. By this emotional and unscientific treatment of history Sir Robert leads us to the conclusion that the Nazis are the authentic heirs of the German tradition "Nazism is not an aberration but an outcome." He will have it that Germans always were and still are savages, "butcher-birds" as he calls them, led by "envy, self-pity and cruelty," whose trade always was and always will be war—unless they should undergo, as a race, some magical process of "conversion." Nor will he allow any qualification: for him Bach and Beethoven, Kant and Goethe lived in vain. "To mankind as a whole Germans have brought nothing but misery in all its worst forms."

The extravagance of this tirade should be its own antidote. History is a deep quarry from which any amateur can draw his indictment of any great nation at will. German historians, better equipped than Sir Robert Vansittart, have done it many times at our expense. Without going back two thousand years, there are wars enough in our record. *Lebensraum* is a German word, but can the owners of a quarter of the earth treat the passion for expansion as an exclusively German vice? It was once fashionable to indict the French love of war and glory in much the same style. Germany had, after all, been over-run first by Louis XIV's generals and then by Napoleon, before in her turn she over-ran France. If Bismarck waged three wars, did not Louis Napoleon wage four? But such recrimination is as childish as it is mischievous.

The soundest part of Sir Robert's case lies in the chapters that pillory the barbarous duelling code of the Junker and officer caste. The real difference between Western Europe and Germany is that feudalism was never defeated there as it was in England and France. The German masses struck too soon in the terrific Peasants' War of 1525, and they were crushed. But those Junkers whom Sir Robert detested are in the saddle no longer. Their masters are the social outcasts who made the Nazi Party and overthrew not merely the democratic republic but all the traditions of science, morals and law that had their roots in the nobler past of the German nation. Nazism, as we read its foul record, is not the fulfilment of this German past. It is, on the contrary, a conscious revolt against all the values of the rationalist civilisation of the West. Of that civilisation Germany was a member, until this pariah party, aided by the folly of France and Britain, swarmed out of the brothels and the slums and trampled on Germany's heritage of moral and intellectual worth.

The real problem before us is to understand the significance of this revolt against Western civilisation. Sir Robert Vansittart forgets all that happened first in Latin Italy. Mussolini, before Hitler, and even more explicitly, threw over its values of humanity, emancipated himself from the restraint of law, identified democracy with decadence, repudiated economic welfare as an end to pursue, laughed at any international good, idealised war and erected the lust for power and conquest as the only motive worthy of a virile nation. Fortunately, his efforts to practice this barbaric code were less formidable than Hitler's, but through two decades he distorted Italian civilisation in the same sense. The naive explanation that Germans are congenital savages will not cover the facts, and after a glance at Italy we might invite experts of the Vansittart school to contemplate Vichy, Madrid, and the Austria of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg. History, temperament, social structure and even geography may give to Fascism a somewhat different colour in each land it afflicts, but it is a European phenomenon and we must seek its explanation in widely prevalent conditions. Versailles does not explain it, though it helped to give Nazism its peculiar note of anger and revenge.

It may be as well to ask what in its saner moments Fascism does profess to do. It offers a planned economy and dismisses the *laissez-faire* of capitalist liberalism as a form of anarchy. Because democracy permits the free play of the class struggle, it resorts to compulsion, suppression and "the leader-principle" in order to compel an entire nation to work and produce in accordance with its plan. It manages to deceive the enslaved workers because it offers them security from unemployment. It starts by rejecting any conception of international good and by asserting national or racial egoism in the extremest form. But it inherits an elaborate industrial mechanism that cannot be content with self-sufficiency. It realises that any workable economic plan must operate on an international scale. This it proposes to achieve by conquest under the specious name of the New European Order. What began, at a superficial glance, as a reversion to nationalism turns out to be a plan for securing a sort of international order, economic as well as political. We are compelled by every instinct of self-preservation to fight against this evil doctrine and aims. It means slavery and degradation. But we shall go astray unless we recognise that in its own intolerable way Fascism does profess to create a stifling kind of world order.

The answer to Fascism must be wider than any policy towards Germans. Sir Robert Vansittart does not say what he would do with them. Exterminate them? Enslave them? Mount guard over them for ever? Even if he could "convert" and change their barbarous hearts, the problem of order remains. Fascism won its successes because the rest of us, socialists no less than capitalistic liberals, had failed to solve it. Hitler won power because the world slump had driven six million unemployed German workers to despair. We tried after 1918 to banish one kind of disorder, war, and because we conceived our problem too narrowly, our League failed to do even that. Pausing for a moment in his absorbing tasks, Mr. Bevin reminds us that the workers ask for security. They will never get it save in a society that dare plan for plenty and on an international scale. Our first war aim is to survive, and that we can do only by destroying, not the Germans, but the Nazi power-machine. But the enemy for us is Fascism, and it can be vanquished only when we offer Europe a plan of co-operative work that reconciles order with freedom.

* *Black Record.* Hamish Hamilton. 6*d.*

# THE FUTURE OF IMPERIALISM

"A WAR against British imperialism"—"A war of rival imperialisms." The Nazi strophe from Berlin is answered by the Communist antistrophe from the chorus in Moscow. The stout-hearted Briton, who, like a sensible man, thinks that the main job is to win the war, whatever it may be, is unmoved and uninterested, for he regards these ideological slogans—not without reason—as merely part of the non-stop propaganda of Dr. Goebbels and the Comintern. Even if they are, he might with advantage give a thought to them. For the slogans belong to that exasperating class of half-truths which are more seductive and

dangerous than lies and which therefore the professional propagandist finds the most effective weapon against the many people whose pure and simple hearts are guided by feeble brains. There is a quarter of the truth in the statement that we are fighting this war to preserve the British Empire against destruction by Hitler, in the statement that the Nazis are fighting it to destroy the British Empire, in the statement that Hitler is fighting it in order to establish a German world-empire, in the statement that we are fighting it to prevent the establishment of a German Nazi empire. There you have four statements each with a quarter truth in them, yet Truth is so elusive and unmathematical that, even if you combine all four, you will still get a statement which gives you about one-quarter of the truth. But they show that the two slogans given above should not be brushed aside as pure propaganda, for imperialism and empire are among the causes of this war and their future will be determined by how the winner of the war makes the peace. In other words, the future of peace will largely be determined by the future of imperialism.

The trouble is that the words empire and imperialism have become surrounded by such an aura of emotion that it is almost impossible to discuss—or even think about—the subject intelligently; that is why the hackles of the German rise in hate and of the Englishman in pride at mention of the British Empire. If we want peace when we have won the war, we must make up our minds what we are going to do with the British Empire, and in making our decision we must try to steer clear of the aura of emotions and the rising and falling of hackles. It will help us to get into the right frame of mind if we consider what we did with the British Empire in the interval of uneasy peace which divided the war which ended in 1918 from the war which began in 1939. Luckily an admirable and intelligent book has recently been published which gives just the kind of survey of the facts which we require.*

In the nineteenth century we seemed to be on the road to establish, through free trade, a new and beneficent type of empire. "It did not abolish political frontiers, but by refusing to enforce them by economic barriers it diminished their importance. It showed a way by which empires in future, unlike all empires of the past, could dissolve without disintegrating—by bringing themselves into a wider world order." It is worth remembering that "it was Joseph Chamberlain, of all people, who most emphatically and proudly enunciated Great Britain's rejection of privileged imperial ownership." Later on, as the century waned, it was Joseph Chamberlain who made himself the protagonist of the exactly opposite policy and ideal—an economically militant empire, surrounded by a ring-fence of tariffs, a unit armed for the defence—but also for the defensive-offensive—in a hostile world order. In the period 1918 to 1939, it was the latter policy or ideal which triumphed and the economic structure of the Empire was revolutionised in its relation to "the world order"—and, as everyone should know now, you cannot change economic without also changing social and political structure. At Ottawa the new building was given—so it was believed—its final form.

The fundamental idea underlying the Ottawa policy was that of a self-sufficient empire. As Mr. Hancock's book shows, in the economic imperial bargaining upon which it was based each "white" unit of Empire—i.e., the mother country and each of the Dominions—was expected to proceed on the principle: "We first, the other units of the Empire second, the foreigner nowhere." The lesser breeds, the Crown Colonies, etc., which sat below the salt at the imperial table, were dragged into the scheme by the Colonial Secretary and the scruff of their necks, and, being unable themselves to pursue the sacred path of self-interest, they frequently had to content themselves with such crumbs as fell from the white, self-governing part of the table. The Ottawa policy had failed before it was engulfed in the war of 1939. Meat and dairy produce soon taught the British Government that it was part of a world economic order from which it could not cut itself off without catastrophic results; Belgians and barley and finally wool taught the same lesson to the Australians; mutton, lamb, and butter taught it to the New Zealanders. By 1938 the trade discussions between the British and Australian Governments and the United States economic agreements with Britain and Canada showed that facts had already compelled a retreat from Ottawa. And there were other facts which were causing uneasiness. The foreigner was to be nowhere within the ring-fence of the British Empire. The fence encloses a large amount of the world's surface and population and the foreigner was not everywhere regarding his exclusion passively. Imperialism, economic or otherwise, is a game which two can play at. It soon began to be evident that Dr. Schacht was playing it in the Balkans on a somewhat new and not unsuccessful system devised by himself. In Berlin Herr Hitler was making Germany "self-sufficient" and furnishing himself with weapons which might enable him to expand a self-sufficient Germany into a self-sufficient German Empire. It looked as though economic imperialism might once more end in war or that, to put it in another way, war is a continuation of economic imperialism by other means.

The war came and we are now in it, but it will end some day in peace again. What are the lessons which the British Empire can learn from the history of this interval between the two wars? The first lesson is that the ring-fence empire, unless it is so small as to be unimportant or so large that it is practically a world-empire, must almost certainly lead to war. The second is that the imperialism of Ottawa is a contradiction in terms. The idea that you can put a ring-fence round the British Empire and exclude the foreigner, while at the same time you can maintain the existing standard of life of the population of the British Isles and safeguard the markets of the Dominions and Colonies for their primary products, is a fantastic delusion, and the years 1932 to 1938 proved it to be such. Militant hostile imperialisms in the modern world can be conducted on the fascist system whose standard of value is guns and power, not butter; it cannot be conducted on Ottawa principles of eating your cake and having it. The statesmen who met at Ottawa all maintained in their speeches, though not by their acts, that their object was to clear out the channels of world trade and stimulate and increase the trade of the world. You cannot do that by putting the Empire first and second and world trade nowhere.

If therefore we wish for peace and prosperity, we must turn our backs upon both the fascist and the Ottawa ideas of empire; we must go back to Joseph Chamberlain's idea of an empire which refuses to enforce political by economic barriers and can dissolve itself in a wider world order. That does not mean a return to the *laissez-faire*, liberal empire of the nineteenth century. Though we reject both fascist imperialism and the British imperialism of the 1920's and 1930's, there is an element of reality and value in both of them which we will reject at our peril. Both of them aim at creating economic areas which transcend political frontiers and at large-scale economic planning within those areas. This aim is in accordance with the impulse of the most important facts in modern history. More than half our catastrophic public miseries and follies are due to the hopeless dislocation between our political institutions and ideas and economic facts. Economic facts impel us towards international organisation, to world planning of production and distribution; the parochial politics of nationalism attempt to "clear the channels of world trade" by blocking them at every frontier and by pretending that the economic system of the world has not altered since the days of Adam Smith.

Our object in the new economic order should really be to "clear the channels of world trade." But that can only be done by considering world trade as a whole and the contribution which large units do or can make towards it. Thus the impulse of imperialism and fascism to create large economic units integrated by a system of semi-barter is sound. The organisation of world trade must be large scale organisation; it must, in fact, be international, and therefore it must be directed by Governments. But the objective of Governments should not be the parochial mercantilism of the fascist or imperialist, the system of hostile economic confederations under which Governments are perpetually cutting off their economic noses in order to spite their neighbours' face. It is sound that the British should plan with the Australian Government what meat and with the New Zealand Government what meat and butter it will take from them for a term of years, but it is unsound—as the parochial imperialists learnt between 1935 and 1938—to disregard world-trade in meat and butter in making the plan, to push the Danish and Argentinian producers out of the economic world. What we must do, if we want peace and prosperity, is to extend the Ottawa system from the empire to the world, to bring into it the Danish and Argentinian producer as well as the Australian and New Zealander, and, as we include instead of excluding producers, so we must include rather than exclude potential markets. There is no insuperable difficulty in the planning and control of world production and consumption of butter on such lines, except perhaps the fathomless stupidity of the human race. If we win this war, we shall be, at least temporarily, in such a dominating position that, if we rise above our own stupidity, we might impose such a system upon the world. Then perhaps Chamberlain's dream of a beneficent British Empire dissolving without disintegration into a wider world order might come true. At any rate, that is the only future for imperialism which does not contain the seeds of battle, murder, and sudden death.

LEONARD WOOLF

* Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs. Vol. II. Problems of Economic Policy, 1918-1939. Part 1. By W. K. Hancock (Oxford Press, Milford, and Royal Institute of International Affairs, 15/-).

# A LONDON DIARY

I WELL remember when Claud Cockburn returned to this country from the United States and found an outlet for his unusual journalistic talents in the *Week*. Cockburn had travelled in Germany after leaving Oxford and had been *Times*' correspondent in New York. Indeed, he was so well thought of in Printing House Square that the journalist world regarded him, young as he was, as understudy for Wilmot Lewis, the famous *Times*' correspondent in Washington. Cockburn threw up this promising career because he could not cut his coat to the *Times*' measure. He began the *Week* without capital, and made a remarkable success of it from the first. He set the pace with a racy style of American reporting, which he used with such wit and vim that hundreds of people who disliked his political tendencies enjoyed his collection of gossip and unpublished news stories. In those days I used to amuse myself with calculating how many of the *Week's* prophecies came off and how many of its advance "stories" were proven true. The proportion during the early years was surprisingly high. Cockburn had excellent contacts, and journalists who could not use all their information on their own Fleet Street papers were delighted to see some of it appear in the *Week*. Whether you agreed with Cockburn or not, you enjoyed the *Week* because it so relished the job of lifting the veil of respectability from well-established institutions and persons; it revelled in the "low-down" on the news in a manner which is familiar in America, but which was a novelty in England. Cockburn kept people guessing; I remember a very conventional reader of the *Week* saying to me that he could never make out "whether Cockburn was really a Red or just a damned good journalist." The subscription list of the *Week* would make interesting reading. "Intellectuals" form a small proportion. It was read in influential circles in the City, Whitehall and Westminster; by titled people in Mayfair; by Scotland Yard officers—indeed by inquisitive persons of every party and class. It set the pattern for a spate of other news-letters. Part of its attraction was that it was a cyclostyled production, which arrived on the breakfast-table by post. To have advance and intriguing information which you could try out on your neighbours in the City appealed to many who would not have spent 4*d*. on printed gossip on the news-stands. During the war the *Week* deteriorated, partly perhaps because Claud Cockburn's duties as Frank Pitcairn of the *Daily Worker* left him little time for the *Week*, but mainly, I think, because official Communist policy so often seemed just silly. The *Week* is a victim of Stalin's "party line."

* * *

I shall wait for the House of Commons discussion before making detailed comment on the Boothby report. It is enough now to say that Bob Boothby's great mistake in life has been to plunge deeply in the City. Having a load of debt about his neck he looked for help from his friends, and was clearly not as candid as he should have been about his expectation of help from his friend Weininger. That he sincerely believed, and with good reason, that he was serving this country by his fight on the issue of Czech gold everyone will agree. They will also agree that he ought to have divulged his hope of benefiting by the campaign. At the Ministry of Food Boothby showed just that kind of drive and enthusiasm which Government Departments need. He is one of the most popular M.P.s, and one of the most delightful of companions. That the nation should have lost his services at such a time and on such an issue is a wretched business.

* * *

I was a bit surprised to find Mrs. Stubbs and her fourteen-year-old son on the train travelling up to London on a Saturday. She was bombed out at the beginning of the Blitz: we had got together to set her and her family up with blankets and chairs and enough other necessities to make an empty bungalow habitable. And now she was going back to London and so was Mrs. Smith and her little girl who were billeted down the road. Yes, they were going back to London; they preferred the bombs. It was a pity for the boy: he'd enjoyed the country and if he had been able to find a job he could have stayed. But the bungalow had been difficult: the people who had locked themselves in the kitchen on the first day had never let anyone go in and use the range. It had been difficult to keep the front room clean and decent with sleeping and washing and cooking and living in it. And the villagers did not like evacuees. Mrs. Stubbs became quite voluble. She thought it was a capitalist war. What did that mean? That the rich made the war and the poor paid for it. She did not think things would be better for the war. Why should they be? Some people had been very kind and the kiddies, she agreed, had a good time. But she thought it would take more than a war to make most people nice to each other. Mrs. Smith broke in. She had been billeted on "quite a decent woman really," but the woman hadn't liked having the little girl's washing in the kitchen. And then she gave birth to a memorable epigram, "No kitchen yet made," she said, "is big enough for two women." A profound truth, which men who do not have to share saucepans and a range and wash up in the same sink, find great difficulty in grasping. "And then," Mrs. Smith went on, "there's my husband with no one to look after him." Perhaps Mrs. Smith feared that if she did not look after him someone else would? All this is precisely typical. Child billeting is successful: adult seldom works. Unoccupied houses can be used successfully provided there is someone to advise and supervise. In some places it can be a great success where the billeting officer really makes a profession of tactfully sorting out people and settling the problems they cannot solve themselves. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Stubbs go back with the little girl and the big boy to the bombed houses and the risk of fire on the top of bombs. They know what they are in for: the tubes, they hear, are not too bad now, with bunks and all, and anyway home even without windows means a "place of your own." It means the feeling of independence and the familiarity of the life you've grown up in. But it would not surprise me to see Mrs. Stubbs and Mrs. Smith back in the village before long.

* * *

A correspondent writes that he received the Ministry of Food's *Food Fact* asking for "your favourite economy trick with food." He was inspired to "yield up" the following "cherished secret" to Lord Woolton.

> You ask me for my favourite economy trick with food. Here it is. I lunch and dine at first-class restaurants, where I find not only that I can eat to repletion, but also it economises my coupons no end.
>
> I notice that many of my fellow "workers" in this town also resort to this same "trick"; hence no doubt the wonderful way in which we are maintaining our strength and morale in these dark days.

* * *

There is a wealth of French talent in exile. Much of it is in America, but that representatives of the best in French life and culture have chosen Britain for their temporary home is demonstrated by the publication of the monthly periodical, *La France Libre*, of which the third number has just appeared. I am not much impressed by the daily *La France*, but I have nothing but praise for the appearance, substance and spirit of *La France Libre*. It is ruthlessly analysing the national errors of the past years, producing a valuable chronicle of contemporary developments in France, and courageously prospecting the future. The subscriber to this periodical (2*s*. monthly) will not be indulging in patronage, but getting value for his money. Read the *Chronique de France* and Professor Brogan's article on Maurras and *Action Française*. These are good examples from the January issue of the right kind of article.

* * *

I have just been reading the first Study Outline in the Study Course on "The New China," prepared by the China Campaign Committee under the general editorship of Miss Margery Fry. "Co-operation with the Chinese people," the prospectus tells us, "will be all the more effective if it is based on a knowledge and understanding of the role which she already plays in the modern world." The Committee has provided an excellent basis for such a study. Professor E. R. Hughes, of Oxford University, has written what should be a stimulating introduction to the culture of the Chinese people—"two thousand years in a thousand words." There is another section on China's Agricultural System, still based on the venerable tradition of peasant and family life. The Chinese patriot to-day thinks less of the sanctity of this tradition than of the improvement of the standard of living of the peasant. Students who have already enrolled in this Course are provided with the excellent map and descriptive article on China which appear in the current number of Serial Map Service. For 3*s*. you can take the Study Course, and at the end of it, you will have the chance of winning a first-prize of £3 if you write the best essay on one of these subjects: "China, the Land and the People"; "China's Place in Modern History," or "China Faces the Future." The address of the Committee is 32 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1. It is a curious but encouraging fact that at this moment of national danger there is a large and growing public which demands information about China.

* * *

The Temple will have to undergo considerable reconstruction and I suggest that the opportunity be taken to make its tenancy less exclusive. The lawyers have had a long innings—over five centuries—

and it is questionable whether the profession has adequately repaid the community for its exclusive occupancy of these lovely courts and gardens. It has framed the legal setting for our unequal society and it has always appeared complacent about the results whilst profiting from the complexities. England has had its great and progressive lawyers, but I doubt if the most loyal member of the profession would claim that it had ever been in the van of social reform. Its highest favours fall to skilful practitioners, like Lord Simon, and we are paying too dearly for the influence exerted by this type of mind. Mr. Greenwood and Lord Reith might consider dedicating the original site of the Templars to scholars whose educational heritage has been usurped and whose aspirations are rather for social welfare than for glittering prizes. The Temple might well become a University Centre with an international appeal. Let scholarship and the humanities possess the long serene line of King's Bench Walk, where, in centuries of leisure and good living, lawyers have never even set themselves to develop a science of jurisprudence for a civilised and democratic society.

* * *

Nathaniel Gubbins, the wag of the *Sunday Express*, can endow his columns with a profuse and sardonic eloquence, but he displayed a sure touch when he raised his eyebrows in a single exclamatory Eh? and then quoted the following remark of an Air Ministry official.

*The Germans were encouraged by easy victories in Poland where lack of defences enabled them to use day bombers as we would over tribesmen.*

* * *

I can recommend Compton Mackenzie's *Red Tapeworm* (Chatto, 8*s.* 6*d.*) as a way of shortening a protracted railway journey. It has no unusual qualities, nothing of *Sinister Street* or *Aegean Memories*. It is a mildly amusing satire on Ministers who broadcast not wisely but too much and on Civil Servants who always reply that any question is being investigated, taken into consideration and borne in mind. These formulae reminded me of the remark of a journalist who was tired of the official communiqués during Ramsay MacDonald's World Economic Conference. "So the Conference is winding up?" I said when I met him outside the door. "Yes," he said, "I kept it going a fortnight ago when they told me they were petering out." "You did? How was that?" "Well, you see, I asked the officials had they viewed the matter from every angle? They said yes, they thought they had. Had they explored every avenue and followed up every channel? Yes, they thought they had. But, I persisted, had they left no stone unturned? Ah, they said, perhaps they had not quite done that, and so they went back for another fortnight."

* * *

A doctor with an extremely good practice in one of the most comfortable English towns volunteered for the Army at the outbreak of war. He has lately been granted six months' leave to attend to his practice. He writes to a friend that his practice has disappeared; it has been "acquired" by his colleague who stayed behind. One of his ex-patients said: "I am now being attended by Dr. ——. We stick by the doctors who stick by us." CRITIC

## THIS ENGLAND

**Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to G. L. S.**

**All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.**

London property of every class has suffered from the direct and indirect consequences of what has been well called the Battle of London. No improvement can be anticipated until that trouble is over, but in the meantime buyers and tenants may pick up profitable bargains in sites, houses and commercial premises.—Estate Market report in the *Times*.

The object of Gandhi is the same as Hitler's. He desires to wreck the British Empire.—*National Review*.

Can any reader tell me the correct way to carry a shot fox? In the conditions of to-day there is credit rather than obloquy in adding a "red dog" to the game bag, and at least it should be carried off the field in triumph. But how? The hare and the rabbit I can manage; the pheasant, too; but when I saw a keeper carrying a "red dog" by grasping all four pads and allowing the head to hang backwards at one end and the brush to trail at the other, I felt there was something wrong.—Letter in *Birmingham Post*.

Because it is considered that the word "undertaker" is out of date, Caterham Cemetery by-laws are to be amended and the designation "funeral director" substituted.—*Evening News*.

The Nazi education is so debasing the German character and blunting the intelligence of the German youth that in our own interest it would be a pity to interfere with the continuance of that process.—President of the Board of Education quoted in the *Times*.

What are you doing to Save? Why not see the great Bargains in Hand-woven Indian Carpets? Ranging in sizes and prices from 6 *gns.* to 40 *gns.*—Advt. in *Evening Standard*.

## COST OF LIVING INDEX

TELL me not, in graphed statistics,
Rising costs are but a dream:
Food-stores don't encourage mystics:
Prices are just what they seem.

Jam is dearer! Ham needs earning!
And we know the price of sole!
Woolton's maxima, we're learning,
Aren't adapted to the dole.

Lives of poor men all remind us
Index costs aren't worth a dime,
And our shopping trips still find us
Pennies poorer every time.

ALLAN M. LAING

## SPANISH CATHOLICISM

"SHOULD England attempt to lead a kind of Christian Crusade against Fascism and National Socialism, she would fail, for it would be nothing but a Protestant Crusade against the Catholic world," said the eminent Catholic paper, *Illustrazione Romana*, in its New Year article. It claimed for the Axis and its New Order the support not only of Italian, German and French Catholics but also of "the twenty million Catholics of Spain who, while not actually taking part in the fight on the battlefields, lend their prestige and their moral and spiritual assistance." This statement was broadcast to the world by the official radio station of Franco's Catholic Spain on the first day of this year.

English Catholics take great pains to justify and to glorify the triumphant Spanish Catholicism and its State. They ignore the fact that this Spanish Catholicism is, and has always been, something by itself, radically different from modern English Catholicism. More than in any other European country, the body of the Church was intimately allied with the State in Spain, and its clergy was the decisive factor in politics, from the Middle Ages to the most recent years. There is an old and unbroken tradition, but not of faith and mysticism: a tradition for the leaders of the Spanish Church to be warriors and politicians rather than priests. The records of the Archbishopric of Toledo alone include a series of great men of this stamp, from Dom Bernardo, who rose against his King, Alfonso VI, to Dr. Gomá, Cardinal Primate of Spain, who fought against his Government—the Government of the Republic. The Borjas—before ever they became Italianised as "the Borgias," and even afterwards—were princes of the Spanish Church. And the Catholic Kingdom of Spain retained for itself the authority to nominate Cardinals (subject, of course, to the Pope's veto and the confirmation of the Cardinals' College) who would carry on the grand political tradition. Modern Spanish history shows the spirit of the warrior-bishops degenerated to the ugly figure of that priest, Santa Cruz, a Carlist guerrilla fighter, famous as a savage butcher, whom the Pretender Don Carlos himself repudiated in horror. At the end of this lineage stands a monk who, in 1921, was sent by his superior to do penance as a priest in the Spanish Foreign Legion, and who showed himself as skilful in killing Moors as in giving extreme unction to dying soldiers.

But there is, and was, yet another Spanish Catholicism.

I was educated in the Spanish pattern of the Roman Catholic faith. But I happen to know the framework of the Spanish Church from the inside, not, as most people do, from the outside. I grew up among hard-swearing priests who gambled away the contents of alms-boxes in the sacristy, and also among priests who taught me to love the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount and the life and example of St. Francis of Assisi. In my family there was a missionary to China who died for his faith in the Boxer Rising; and there was Don Luis Bahía who, after his death, was made notorious as a business figurehead for the Society of Jesus by a law-suit over his

testament. I abandoned religious practice, and sought contact with those priests who at the beginning of this century had attempted—timidly enough—to infuse a cleaner Christian spirit into the Spanish Church. After the outbreak of the Nationalist Rebellion, many of them were shot or imprisoned by the Fascists who had the blessing of Cardinal Gomá. So were many Basque priests shot or imprisoned by Franco's triumphant gentlemen—many of those poor country priests who said Mass for two pesetas and ploughed their own bit of land for subsistence, of those simple-minded priests whose advice was sought by the people of their villages as if they were fathers and brothers.

I do not mention this to revive the stale and evil-smelling controversy as to how many priests were killed on each side. I mention it to show the two worlds within Spanish Catholicism, one of which no leading English Catholic seems ever to have discovered.

The great Catholic intellectual, José Bergamin, said in November 1936 to a foreign journalist who wanted an explanation of the burning of churches and killing of clerics in towns and villages of Republican Spain: "When these poor barbarians kill priests and burn churches they do it not out of hatred, nor out of indifference, but rather as a man may kill the wife he loves when he finds out that she has deceived and betrayed him."

All the bitterness of disillusionment and deception has not killed that underlying tenderness. One day in 1937, Mauro Bajatierra, the leading Anarchist journalist, told a story in *Solidaridad Obrera*, the organ of the Catalan Anarchists. Near the Puerta de Hierro of Madrid, he had met an ambulance carrying wounded soldiers from the trenches to the first-aid post. One of the men was dying and wanted to say a last Paternoster, but could not remember the words. Mauro Bajatierra, the Anarchist, said the Paternoster with him, word by word. Afterwards he planted on the man's grave a cross which he himself had made out of two boughs from a nearby tree. And then he had the courage to tell the story to his "atheist" Anarchist comrades. To those same wild Anarchists among whom Padre Leocadio Lobo lived for weeks in the trenches, winning their trust and friendship by his simple, shining and manly faith and returning to exclaim about them: "What savages, and what magnificent men!"

For there is a great mass—well nigh a majority—of Spaniards who have learnt to resent the triumphant, powerful political Church just because they have their deep inarticulate faith and long for other, cleaner priests. There are crude labourers who believe in God, but blaspheme when the jewel-studded Virgin is paraded before their eyes while they go hungry. For centuries, men in miserable hamlets have cursed priests who were moneylenders and "caciques"—village bosses—and loved their "good" priest, when they got him, with child-like affection. For generations men, proud in their own beliefs, felt shamed and violated at being driven to Mass and Communion by the threat that otherwise they would lose their living and their social standing.

And all this has now been brought back to Spain by that triumphant political Catholicism praised by the *Tablet* and flattered by good British Liberals. Much has come back which had seemed finished for ever. In my early youth, many employers demanded from their workers and clerks a certificate that they had fulfilled their duty and attended Easter Communion—failing which they were sacked. Poor people had to show the same certificate if they wanted to receive charity. To-day, things are carried even farther. Some weeks ago, Radio Sevilla explained to its listeners the modalities of the new bread-rationing system: it explained that some ration cards would be marked "preferential" and others "urgent." Then it proceeded to the seemingly inconsequential statement that inhabitants were reminded of their obligation to attend Mass. . . .

Five thousand prisoners in a concentration camp near Madrid attended Mass and went to Communion "like one man," Spanish propaganda proclaimed proudly some months ago. To the feelings of true Spanish Christians this coercion must have been a shameful sacrilege.

The children of these men in the vast concentration camps are often forced to live on "charity" in one of the many institutions run by half-Catholic, half-Fascist organisations. They are led to Mass with the utmost regularity. They are being educated "in the traditional religious spirit of Spain" and in Falangism.

A very prominent cleric, Padre Perez del Pulgar, who died last year, advised Franco, not to "forgive sins so that sins should be forgiven," but to organise a truly repulsive scheme of exploitation and cheap labour by admitting the lesser fry of political prisoners to "redemption by work," converting imprisonment into forced labour. This is a clever plan: remember, very many of the skilled workers of Spain are political prisoners, or else refugees.

Meanwhile, the pomp and splendour of the Spanish Church, has come back, and all the Ministers and Generals of Franco's Government religiously take part in the pageant.

The chasm between the two Catholic worlds in Catholic Spain is thus becoming deeper than ever. In a terribly relentless evolution, it will give birth to new resentment, new hatred, and to new violence.

By blandly accepting ruling Spanish Catholicism at its face value, Catholic—and other—politicians in England make themselves accomplices in this development. But in addition to this spiritual guilt, they incur a purely political guilt against their own country in glossing over the political affiliations and diplomatic activities of that ruling Spanish Catholicism, affiliations which the Roman paper quoted at the beginning of this article diagnosed accurately enough. The relations between Spanish Catholicism and international Fascism, however, require another article.

# ON MEETING AUTHORS

WHEN I was young, I used to meet people, great readers, who said that one ought never to meet authors—that, after their books, they were disappointing and even dull. Some of them were people who had stayed at a hotel at which a famous author was staying and had found that he said "Good morning," or "The wind's getting colder," just like a stockbroker. Apparently, they expected the poet to wear his singing-robes even when greeting casual strangers and the wit to keep the lounge in constant laughter with a succession of epigrams on a level with those in the best scene in *Lady Windermere's Fan*. They hoped in fact to hear an author talking like a book or a play—a hope which (it seems to me, fortunately) is seldom fulfilled.

I have myself often been reluctant to meet authors, but not because I feared I should be disappointed in them. My chief feeling was that, if I did not meet authors, I should enjoy much greater freedom as a reviewer of books in criticising them. There are critics who say that acquaintance or friendship with an author makes no difference in their judgment of his work, but I confess it makes some difference in mine. I cannot like a man without liking his work better than before I met him. This, you may think, shows weakness of character, and that is probably true. But it also means that, when you know a man well, or even if you do not know him well but like him, you become more conscious of the virtues than of the vices of his work. For one thing, if he is a good writer, you began to realise his fundamental sincerity, however his literary mannerisms may have irritated you or his opinions have aroused your hot-eyed opposition. The living author whom you meet becomes remote from contemporary prejudice like the great dead, and so you may be able to judge him even more justly than if you knew him only as a novelty in print.

Of course, I never thought of this casuistry at the time. I should have called it cant and an excuse for log-rolling. My real reason for not wanting to meet certain authors was that I wanted to be able to criticise them—hostilely, if necessary—without feelings of embarrassment, and that I should feel much less embarrassed in doing so if I never met them and liked them. I remember how for this reason I pleaded a previous engagement when an invitation came over the telephone to meet James Joyce during his last visit to London. I did not want to meet him, not because I doubted his genius, but because I thought, being a Victorian, that obscenity should be confined to the smoking room and not be allowed to overflow into literature in an age of universal education; and I wanted to be able to say so, if necessary, without the embarrassment one feels if one knows the man one is criticising. A second invitation reached me by telephone—not from Joyce, but from a friend who wanted to make up his table—and again I pleaded another engagement. Then, one evening when I arrived home from Fleet Street, the telephone being in other hands, I was told: "Herbert Hughes rang up, and we're dining with the Hugheses and the James Joyces at Scott's on Tuesday evening." I scowled at the betrayal, but things were obviously past praying for.

It is only fair to explain that these invitations did not originate in any desire on the part of Joyce to meet me, but were merely the acts of courtesy of mutual friends who thought I might be interested in meeting a famous fellow Irishman.

I do not remember much about the dinner at Scott's except Mrs. Joyce's infinite good nature, Joyce's constantly addressing his daughter in Italian, and his calling on the waiter when coffee came to bring him a plate instead of an ash-tray, because, he told me, he could not see

an ash-tray clearly enough to be able to find it with his cigarette-ends. After dinner, we drove to Herbert Hughes's studio in Chelsea, and there I conceived an affection for Joyce which will last to the end of my days. Perhaps it was because he spoke well of Belfast. I had asked him whether he was going over to Dublin and he said that he would never go to Dublin again, that he hated places that were only history and tradition, and that, if he ever went to Ireland again, the place he would like to visit was Belfast. "I like factories," he said. I did not agree with his reasons for wanting to see Belfast, because the surroundings are much more beautiful than the factories, and there are enough traditions in the neighbourhood to link Mr. J. M. Andrews, the new and very charming Prime Minister, with Mr. de Valera. Still, any man who praises Belfast or Ireland in my hearing is on the way to become my friend, and my heart warmed to Joyce. I heard a week later that, in his passion for Belfast, he had been round to Robinson and Cleaver's shop in Regent Street and had been greatly disappointed to find that they did not stock North of Ireland linen collars of a size to fit his small neck.

After this I met him several times, and liked him better every time. What a host he was at the Monico! How carefully and how lavishly he chose the dishes for his guests, though he pecked at them like a chicken himself! How he kept the bottles of a certain Swiss white wine—the only good Swiss wine I ever tasted—circulating! There is an Irish word pronounced "flahool" and meaning "princely," and Joyce was certainly "flahool" in his hospitality. He talked much that night about Sullivan, the singer whose greatness it was one of the passions of his life to establish, as "Critic" mentioned last week. It was said that he used to buy rows of stalls in the Paris Opera House, and give them away to friends in the hope that they might spread the fame of Sullivan. Joyce in early life had hoped to be a singer, and it is on record, I believe, that as a youth he was an entrant at a Gaelic musical festival in the same competition as John McCormack. Yet, apart from singing, he was not interested in music. If you were talking about music, and mentioned one of the great conductors, he would shake his head slightly and say decisively: "I don't care for instrumental music."

He came to see us more than once after that, and the more I saw of him the more I liked him, and the more I realised the purity of his purpose as an artist in printing a number of words that, I still think, should rightly belong to spoken rather than to written language, and, if written, should be confined to the wall-scribblings of the very, very young. I re-read *Ulysses*, not with hostility, but (so to say) without prejudice, and I liked the best parts of it better than I had liked them before. (And I do not mean Mrs. Bloom). When Joyce sent me a gramophone record of his reading from *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, I even began to see some meaning in that strange philological phantasmagoria on which he spent so many of the last years of his life. I do not mean to say that I became an enthusiast either for *Ulysses* or for *Finnigan's Wake;* but I enjoyed pieces of them and respected them as the work of a good man and a sincere man. That is the worst—and, perhaps, the best—of meeting an author and liking him.

Another author to a new view of whom I was converted by a single meeting was a very different kind of writer, G. K. Chesterton. In my teens I had been dazzled by his essays in the *Speaker*, forerunner of the *Nation*. His paradoxical anti-paradoxical sentences delighted me as I should have been delighted in childhood if one of those men who used to hawk great nets filled with balloons for sale had set loose all his blue and red and yellow wares into the air for the ecstasy of young eyes. Then came a reaction when I was more conscious of his mannerisms than of his genius. In my early years in London his book on Dickens came out, and, being irritated by his mannerisms, I wrote a review packed with hostility and virulence. (It is true that, when T. W. H. Crosland, to whom I applied for work with this review as a specimen, read it, he said to me earnestly: "Look here, you're praising this fat-'ead. Remember, Mr. Y., if you're going to write reviews for us, there's one rule you must keep in mind about writers: 'For God's sake, don't praise the b—s.'")

In spite of Crosland's interpretation, however, I am sure the review was steeped in venom. Yet, when I afterwards met G. K. C. strolling round the *Daily News* office to collect his weekly cheque as he used to do—having left a hansom cab outside that, by the time he left, would cost him at least two-thirds of his cheque before, after settling down to long conversations with members of the staff, he set off on his belated home journey to Battersea—I immediately became his devotee, loving his mannerisms because they were so obviously a part of himself. Meeting him, you realised at once that, when he set those balloons loose, this was not done for a public show—that it was his nature to chuck balloons riotously into the air—and that his genius and his sincerity expressed themselves as inevitably in this way in private as in print. I do not say that meeting Chesterton turned one's judgment topsy-turvy, but it transformed one's judgment. After one had met him, one's criticism, even if one had to express the opinion that a particular book was not good, was fundamentally pro-Chesterton.

No wonder that I used to fear to meet authors—not because I dislike them, but because I cannot help liking them. Having met them, I like Mr. A—, Mr. E—, Mr. I—, Mr. O—, and Mr. U—. Have these meetings distorted or corrected my judgment? I should say "corrected," but I should not always have said so. Still, I like the authors all the same.

Y. Y.

## THE CITY DOG

THE City dog goes to the drinking trough,
He waves his tail and laughs and goes when he has had enough,
His intelligence is on the brink
Of human intelligence. He knows the Council will give him a drink.

The wild dog is not such an animal,
Untouched by human kind, he is inimical,
He keeps his tail still, his eyes blink,
And he goes to the river when he wants a drink.

He goes to the river, he stamps on the mud,
And by night he sleeps in the dark wood.

STEVIE SMITH

## INCIDENT

AT five minutes to seven on a Friday evening Ford was getting into his overalls when the Blitz began, noisily. He put on his tin hat and went to the door to have a look out, wondering if he ought to go along to the post without eating his dinner, which was ready.

As he put his head out, a man said "Warden," out of the dark. "Warden," went on the voice irritably. "Come and see these dreadful lights. Don't you think you ought to put them out at once?" Ford went down the street a few yards and found a man in a trilby hat pointing towards the trees in Bedford Court. There were the lights all right, two of them behind the trees and, as they watched, three more came slowly drifting and dropping through the higher sky, red, white and orange. "I'm afraid I can't put *those* lights out," Ford said. "You see, those are flares dropped from German aeroplanes." "Oh, are they?" said the man; his voice was still censorious. The plane droned lower and lower. The guns thumped, spat and crashed. "Don't you think it rather unwise to stand about without a tin hat just . . ." Ford said. But he failed to complete his sentence. A swish had begun. He dropped like a stone full length into the gutter.

The man in the trilby hat took no notice whatever, either of the swish or of the disappearance of his interlocutor. He began explaining how he had always said that the "best way to deal with them 'Uns. . . ." Ford, however, listening, his ear very much to the ground, heard the swish end in a thud without a bang. He thought, "D.A. and near." So the war plans of the man in the trilby hat passed, literally, over his head. Ford picked himself up; another swish began. Something in its note seemed to him menacing. He flung open the area gate and had crashed down the steps by the time this swish ended, with what then seemed a loud bang (although a little later he was to think of it as having been an almost incredibly small bang). Emerging from the area—he hoped with dignity—he found the man in the trilby hat still explaining his own method of bombing Berlin. He had apparently again not noticed that he had

been speaking to the black-out alone. Ford heard, not very loud, but unmistakably, the tinkle of falling glass and the cracking of broken masonry. The man, it may be at length disgusted at this Warden's inattention, remarked, " Well, I must be going on now," and passed into the night.

Ford began to run. He ran in what he thought was the direction of the noises, along Marlow Square, past the Sub-post, deciding (probably wrongly) not to go in and report first, but to go straight for the incident. It did not cross his mind that there could be any difficulty in finding it. Nor did there seem to be. He ran into Gage Street, crossed Royal Walk and the top of James Street, which he glanced down. It touched his consciousness that the outline of its houses—a quarter seen in the blackness—looked unfamiliar. But he thought nothing of that. Now he saw a masked torch, switched on at the far end of Gage Street. In a moment he found Ivy Rawlings standing over a very small crater, just where the street joined the pavement. They used their torches and saw that a couple of cellars were broken in, but the houses seemed undamaged.

" It was quite a small one, then," Ford said.

A white hat came up—Mr. Strong on his bicycle. " Come with me to Royal Walk."

" Is there another incident there ? " Ford asked as they walked.

Strong said, " Considerable damage reported in Royal Walk, but no crater found yet."

Just then a car came up. Strong said, " Stay and stop the traffic." They were just back to the top of James Street. Ford stood about for a bit.

There was no traffic. He began to sense that they were on the fringe of something. He looked down James Street. He could see nothing at all. Surely even to-night one should be able to see the outline of the rows of houses ? The darkness down James Street was, he now realised, something yet again. Thick, like rough woollen curtains. You looked into, or on to, total blankness. He felt that something wasn't there. (Nor was it.)

He began to walk down James Street. Immediately he was in another world. People were moving about and coming up. He saw that the houses opposite him were very considerably shattered. He looked farther down the street and saw that there were no houses. He became conscious of the smell. The unmistakable, indescribable, incident smell flooded into his nostrils. It is more than a smell, it is an acute irritation of the nasal passages from the powdered rubble of dissolved houses ; it is a raw, brutal smell. He realised that the particular darkness which hung over James Street was due, not to the moonless night, but to the fact that the whole of this area was still covered by an unsettled dust cloud. Here's the incident all right, he thought.

Before he had got opposite to the part of James Street that did not appear to be there, he met Miss Sterling. She pointed at the shattered-looking but still standing houses and said, " There's a good many people in there." Mrs. Morley came up, smooth and undisturbed. She said, " The mobile unit " (a sort of medical advance guard consisting of doctor, nurse and stretcher bearers) " has just gone in there," pointing to No. 50.

Ford went into this house. The ground and first floor rooms were more or less all right—nothing more than blown out window frames and shattered plaster. But up from the first floor the stairs were ankle deep in rubble. He went up, passing the second floor rooms. The two top floor rooms and the top landing were deeply encumbered with debris, rubble, slates and roof timber. He looked up ; there was no roof overhead. There were dark clouds, picked out with momentary sparkles of shell bursts, reflected gun flashes and an uneasy searchlight waving its futility.

In the first room two men of a stretcher party, a nurse and another man were bending over a figure lying on a heap of the plaster rubble. Ford saw that it was an injured man. His breathing was violent and laboured. They seemed to be trying to get something down his throat through some sort of tube. One of the stretcher bearers saw Ford. Pointing to the back room he said, " There are two more in there." Ford looked in, cautiously using his torch, supplementing its metal hood with his hand. This room was wrecked. One side of it was heaped halfway up to the ceiling with debris. Several roof timbers lay across it. Ford began to clamber his way into it. He saw something dark lying at his feet. He put the beam of his torch on it and saw that it was a girl. She lay partly in, partly out of, the heaped-up debris of plaster and brick, her body perhaps a third buried, like a high bas-relief. She lay in a pleasant attitude, one hand curved behind her head, her legs a little pulled up, to form, with her body, a gentle S shape. He had seen that attitude once before, in the little Museum of Prehistory in the Dordogne ; a skeleton of a prehistoric girl of the Mousterian age, from one of the abri (they had their abri too). Celia had said, " I never knew that a skeleton could be attractive and elegant ; that one's bones may be chic after twenty thousand years." Here in the top floor back of James Street was the same charming position.

Ford hadn't much doubt that she was dead. She looked so small for one thing ; and there was a severe head wound. But he wondered what could have caused fatal injuries. The roof timbers were fairly light and had had only a few feet to fall. With a feeling of intimacy, he took up her unresisting hand and felt for a pulse. To his surprise he felt, or thought he felt, a very feeble beat. He went back to the front room and said, " Is there a doctor here ? " One of the stretcher party said, " He's a doctor, but he's busy." He pointed to an oldish man bending over the other casualty. Ford said, " I think the girl in here is alive. Will you come and see ? " The doctor gave no sign of having heard. But after a time he came. He ran a hypodermic into the grey, debris-encrusted flesh of her arm—" just in case," he said. He felt for the pulse, but said, " Very improbable."—" Where's the injury ? " said the doctor. Ford said, " Her head, I think." " The *head ?* " said the doctor, as if astonished. Then he ran his fingers over her skull, under her blood and rubble matted hair. But he said nothing. Ford said, " Shall I take her downstairs ? " The doctor said, " No." So they left her, lying easily on the debris, looking through the roof at the sky. JOHN STRACHEY

## THE NEGRO AND TIN PAN ALLEY

IT is just a quarter of a century since a new kind of popular music began to make its appearance in this country through the song writers of Tin Pan Alley : simultaneously, a new word was added to the English vocabulary—jazz. Apart from its technical interest to " legitimate " musicians (Constant Lambert and Professor Sydney Northcote among them), the subject is of interest to the non-musician, for the vast commercial exploitation of jazz idiom has had an impact on social trends comparable to that of the motion-picture industry. Some may consider that the musical fatuity of the popular moon-June type of dance " number " does not justify any serious consideration. I grant the fatuity, and the triteness of much (but not all) of popular dance music—and still insist that something which has become virtually the folk-music of modern youthful England demands more than a patronising examination. The cinema is often enough guilty of fatuity, too. Films like *Winterset*, *Of Mice and Men* and *The Grapes of Wrath* are the exception to rule dictated by the box office.

The problem facing the serious critic of jazz music is to know where to make a start ; the prolific manner in which popular dance tunes are turned out by the staff song-writing teams, and the strong commercial bias imposed on the average orchestra, make it extremely difficult to locate the good jazz (or, as the initiated say, to find jazz among the vast amount of " corn "—for the word " jazz " has now become the musician's designation of honest-to-goodness music as distinct from the " pops " fed to a philistine public). The essential difference between orthodox music and what may be called genuine jazz is that whereas with the former the composer's musical thoughts are translated into a written notation, in jazz, because of the great prominence given to solo and group improvisation against a rhythmic background, the executant tends to become his own composer.

Basically, this music is, of course, very largely negroid. In its pure form it is the folk music of the coloured people of the U.S.A., and emanates from the South. Various authorities have traced the sociological background of jazz to New Orleans between 1895 and 1912, when small groups of semi-illiterate negro musicians broke away from the forms of orthodox music and experimented in unusual tone colours and orchestral effects, hiring themselves out to play in the dance halls and " sporting houses " of the notorious quarter embraced by Basin Street, Canal Street and the old Storyville district, in street parades and even at funerals. The negroes were followed by many white musicians, often recruited from brass bands—and very few of either could read a single note of music. Then, on the popular level, the young American Jew, Irving Berlin, developed ragtime, which attracted so much attention that Stravinsky even named a composition after it. But this ragtime music was not really jazz at all, although it marked a transitional phase linking the original New Orleans music to more developed jazz.

It was in 1909 that the basic negro jazz form, the traditional twelve-bar blues (three four-bar phrases in 4-4 time), emerged as a piece of

written music. This was the work of W. C. Handy, son of a coloured Methodist minister, and he utilised the folk-blues formula in a campaign song, which he composed for a mayoral election in Memphis. Subsequently, Handy and other negro musicians further developed the written blues, utilising the folk-songs, work-tunes, spirituals, revivalist shouting and popular ballads which formed the musical diet of the whole coloured population along the Mississippi delta.

So that the period 1909–1920 can be fixed as the formative years of jazz as a vehicle of emotional expression in music. In the meantime, the white musicians of New Orleans had become increasingly attracted by the robust polyphony of novel tone colours devised by the negroes, and during the Great War both white and coloured bands were engaged by Chicago entertainment promoters, one of whom gave the name "jazz bands" to the numerous orchestras under his control. The early spelling of the word was alternatively jas, jass and jaz—and New Orleans musicians themselves were not familiar with the expression. The word appears to have had an obscene meaning in the Chicago slums and in his scholarly *American Jazz Music* Wilder Hobson (who is the editor of the U.S. magazine *Fortune*) states that when one of these "new" orchestras was engaged at a café a rival proprietor inserted an item in a newspaper referring to the group as a "jazz band"—and that this intended knock drew such a crowd of the curious to the café that the management promptly put the word up in lights. It seems likely that the word as a musical term derives from the old minstrel show backstage cry: "Give 'em the jasbo" (meaning to introduce pep into an act). And since New Orleans was once a French possession there may be some connection with the French *jaser*.

The New Orleans bands which went to Chicago and later to New York City in the latter part of the Great War developed a musical style which is now known as "Dixieland jazz"; they played group improvised counterpoint and the best known of these bands appeared on the London stage and at the Hammersmith Palais in the immediate post-war years. The blues, however, still remained chiefly the preserve of the coloured players and singers—it was not until the middle 'twenties that the blues, sometimes in their original and often in commercialised forms, began to figure in the music to which white people danced in West End, suburban and provincial dance halls. The greatest of all the coloured blues singers was the late Bessie Smith, who was killed in a motor car accident three years ago. A big woman with a large, strident voice, she declined to water down the authentic blues in order to become a "popular" attraction and most of her gramophone records were for the American "race" companies specialising in music for the coloured people. Robeson, whose name is much better known to white people, is a fine actor with a fine voice—but Bessie Smith, with her nostalgic emotionalism and sometimes pornographic story-telling, is far more representative of the American negro. For the true musical expression of the negro is the blues, not the *Swanee River* type of composition attributed to him by the white man. The blues is the American negro's contribution to music, and because it could be easily adapted to the general requirements of commercial jazz it has influenced the whole course of popular music. The songs warbled by crooners may seem to be a far cry from Handy's *Yellow Dog Blues* or Bessie Smith's *Back Water Blues*, but it is a fact that but for the coloured people of the Southern States, popular dance music as we know it to-day would not exist.

This music, however, devised and developed by the coloured musicians and also by understanding white men, has been taken over by Tin Pan Alley as the means of creating a vast music business. It was the early 'twenties which saw the rise of popular jazz music under various "modifying" influences exerted by musicians such as Paul Whiteman, Art Hickman and Ferde Grofe. They and others began adapting the pure jazz form to commercial requirements and this commercialised product was given tremendous popularity by the arrival of radio and talking-pictures. In the middle 'twenties, groups of white and coloured American musicians, many possessing colossal instrumental ability, revolted against these commercial standards and began making gramophone records in which they proved that jazz could have both grace and melody without losing sight of its traditional objectives. These men gave a great impetus to true jazz music, recording under a variety of incognito names at the same time that they held "staff" jobs in the various dance orchestras at hotels, restaurants, and night clubs in broadcasting studios and theatres. Most of these interesting "recording dates" were made by pick-up combinations assembled solely for the purpose. Some of the musicians concerned had started in school and college orchestras, many began their professional careers in night haunts and on river and lake excursion steamers; for a while one such group had a remarkable boy clarinetist, in short trousers, from the Chicago ghetto. He was Benny Goodman, whose phenomenal technique has lately been heard interpreting Mozart with the Pro Art Quartette in New York City—although Goodman is primarily known for his leadership of America's best-known "swing" orchestra. It was, in fact, these musicians who coined the word "swing" (i.e., "this really swings") and it was not long before ordinary band leaders were compelled to take some notice of the vigorous, authentic jazz music produced by these less popular groups. All they did, however, was to introduce into their "commercial" programmes an occasional "hot" or "swing" number, and to-day the much-used word "swing" is applied to flashy, exhibitionistic orchestrations designed as musical "sensations" and having only a distant relationship to the real thing.

I have emphasised the point that improvisation plays a leading part in the production of jazz music. It would be quite possible to write down the exact notation of one of these "classics of jazz" from a gramophone record—but there is no guarantee that the score, reproduced note for note in value by another combination, would sound correct in the jazz sense. Most classical musicians would translate the score in a completely uninteresting manner. To create jazz in the authentic sense a performer must have an intuitive "feeling" for the music (scores of men whose livelihood is gained by playing in dance orchestras do not possess this feeling). For jazz is an intensely personal music and the composer is of less significance than he is in orthodox music. One notable exception to this is the 44-years-old negro composer-performer, Edward Kennedy ("Duke") Ellington, who has composed, arranged and performed with his orchestra music in the genuine manner. And it is perhaps significant that most "serious" musicians are more attracted by his brilliantly scored works in the jazz idiom than by the older jazz school of inspired improvisation. Dr. Northcote has been particularly impressed by Ellington when equally good jazz of a different kind aroused a less cordial interest.

But however interested serious musicians may become in certain aspects of jazz, it is pure nonsense to talk learnedly of a *rapprochement* between jazz and "legitimate" music. The only contribution jazz has to make to musical idiom lies in new methods of exploiting instruments, the production of novel tone colours and the possibilities of small orchestral groups. But although the negro, and the white man who understands his music, have something to say in a genuine musical language, they find little opportunity of saying it, except in their own clubs and cafés and through gramophone records made for the benefit of the minority which appreciates the genuine article. It is doubtful whether the authentic jazz language is ever likely to replace the bastard dialect of "swing" and "sweet" music which has now become public property. A legitimate form of musical expression has, in fact, been three-quarters buried under the huge commercial racket.

DOUGLAS STANNARD

## LONDON BURNING

GONE are the churches, tall watchmen of the city,
Gone are the landmarks that London used to know,
Great halls and ancient walls, fallen, warped and charred now,
Gone are the chiming steeples, cracked and jarred now,
Gone are the bookmen of Paternoster Row.

Red roared the fire through the heart of London's city,
Hurled from the clouds by a brute and savage foe,
They who their own land robbed of light and learning,
Kindled the books here, a brand for London's burning,
Lighted the bonfire of Paternoster Row.

Long shall men mourn the burning of the city,
As long as London town shall stand, or London's river flow,
Mourn the long-treasured links with gentler ages,
Wealth of the humble, old shrines for pilgrimages,
St. Bride's and All Hallow's and Paternoster Row.

Low they shall lie, the wreckers of the city,
Great Gog and Magog will strike a triple blow,
Once for the Guildhall, of worship and of fame there,
Twice for the white spires given to the flame there,
And thrice for the bookmen of Paternoster Row.

SAGITTARIUS

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

### Sadler's Wells Ballet, at the New Theatre

This is the second week of the Sadler's Wells Ballet season at the New Theatre, and it brings renewed proof that though the Ballet has had to sacrifice several of its decors to difficulties of transport, besides those which it was obliged to abandon by the roadside in Holland, it has not sacrificed the quality of its dancing. The exquisite choreography of the *Wise Virgins*, for instance, loses nothing from being performed before curtains, though one missed the dramatic opening of the Golden Gates of Heaven and wished that the steps leading up to them, which were an intrinsic part of the choreographic design, might be restored. The *Divertissements* from *The Sleeping Princess* are rather like butterflies on a pin without their decorative environment; but it is excellent for the dancers that these high feats of classical technique should be demanded of them, even without their context, and they are extremely popular. Palma Nye's performance of Cinderella is outstandingly good, and Bunty Kelly's Red Riding Hood is an assured success, especially if she allows her gift for miming to ally itself to her excellent dancing. The *Pas de Deux* of Margot Fonteyn and Robert Helpmann is as brilliant as ever. Pamela May also is in exceptionally good form in every part, and is beautifully partnered by John Hart in *The Gods Go a-Begging*. Now that he has shed a certain stiffness, his romantic appearance and graceful bearing make him an ideal prince to Cinderella, as well as a god in disguise.

Ninette de Valois' ballets are sadly curtailed by the loss of *The Rake's Progress* and *Checkmate*. Since we last saw *The Prospect Before Us* the comic conflagration of the drop-scene has become a tragic reality; one hopes that this entertaining ballet has exhausted its prophetic possibilities. It is now much better danced, and Robert Helpmann continues to surpass himself in his wonderful rendering of the manager O'Reilly.

The lack of an orchestra throws an enormous burden of work on Constant Lambert, conductor, orchestrator and principal pianist, and his contribution to the magnificent quality of the Sadler's Wells Ballet can hardly be overestimated. The great event of the third week will be the production of Frederick Ashton's ballet on Schubert's Wanderer Fantasie.

### "Escape," at the Empire

Frontiers and the ways of getting over them no longer provide the easy thrills of pre-Nazi days. Every thriller that deals in escape from barbed wire and secret police must reckon now with the emotions we all feel about the concentration camp. In *Escape* it is an old woman, once a famous actress (played by Nazimova), who gets caught in the Nazi machine and is condemned to die for unspecified "activities." Her son (Robert Taylor) arrives in all innocence from America to look for her, and is met by the brutal inquisition of officials and the scared silence of everyone else. This atmosphere of the Terror, lurking in looks and footfalls down the street, is forcibly conveyed; most of the scenes take place in tourist's country—a delightful frontier village, pine woods and ski-ing slopes—and these surroundings make a curious, irrelevantly pretty decoration to human misery. Other elements, though convincingly fitted, belong more to the old-style thriller; a Countess (Norma Shearer) sorrowfully involved with a sadistic smiling general (Conrad Veidt), and a young ladies' finishing school which is very free and fictional. *Escape* is skilfully enough made to carry such incongruities; Nazimova as an emblem of tragedy and Conrad Veidt in the smoothest tradition of villainy are held by the tension of a story which keeps taut to the end. The escape itself, with the old woman drugged and driven away in a coffin, is dramatic as well as melodramatic—a rare achievement in screen chases. *Escape* isn't, on the thriller side, so wildly gripping as Hitchcock's *Foreign Correspondent*, and it doesn't illuminate the Nazi mind like *The Mortal Storm*, but somewhere between the two it finds a level of its own. In a lean January we can recommend *Escape* to everyone who wants to escape for ninety minutes.

## THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, January 25th—
- A large number of new books, both English and Russian, will be on show in the Library, S.C.R., 98 Gower Street, W.C.1. 2-4.
- Concert in aid of the Circle of International Art, Beata Grenelli, Joan Davies and Prof. G. Maliniak, Wigmore Hall, 2.15.
- Walter de la Mare: "Lewis Carroll," Dick Sheppard Centre, 52 Queensway, 2.30.

SUNDAY, January 26th—
- C. E. M. Joad: "Purpose and Design Reconsidered," Conway Hall, 11.
- K. B. Smellie: "Social Philosophy," I.S.T.D., 17, Manchester Street, W.1. 11.
- India League Public Meeting for release of Nehru, Azad and other political prisoners, Conway Hall, 2.30.

TUESDAY, January 28th—
- Fabian International Affairs Group Snack Lunch. Speaker: W. N. Ewer, 12 Gt. Newport Street, 1.
- Boyd Bowman: "The Nation's Need for Road Transport," 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1, 1.
- Sir William Bragg: "Diffraction," Royal Institution, 2.30.

WEDNESDAY, January 29th—
- Fabian Women's Group Snack Lunch. Speaker: Mary Smieton. 12 Gt. Newport Street, 1.
- M. Gustave Montet: "L'Art en France au XVIIIe Siècle," Institut Français, 3.

THURSDAY, January 30th—
- Dr. F. Autal: "Gericault and the break-up of Classicism," Courtauld Inst. of Art., 1.15.
- The Dolmetsch Family in music for the Spinet, Viola, Recorders. Art Gallery, Brighton, 3.

# Correspondence

## MR. BEVIN'S CRITICS

SIR,—I wish to challenge some of the statements made by Mr. Hardy in reference to the National Arbitration Tribunal in his article on Mr. Bevin's critics.

Mr. Hardy criticises the smaller unions and describes some of their claims as frivolous. The fact of the matter is that the National Arbitration Order leaves the smaller unions with no alternative course of action. The following is an illustration.

In the industry in which I work there is as yet no basic agreement on wages and conditions although my Branch is working hard in this direction with good prospects of success. On December 2nd last we appeared before the National Arbitration Tribunal as the result of a certain firm's point-blank refusal to discuss our application for a 10 per cent. war bonus. Most of the other firms in the trade had already granted one or more increases since the war began. I was present at the hearing and could not help being struck by the impressive and expensive machinery required to settle a dispute affecting the wages of five people. A frivolous claim indeed!

But what was the alternative? We were not allowed to call a strike; it took from July 13th to December 2nd before the matter was settled and in the meantime the staff had dwindled through leavings and sackings from fourteen to five. The Tribunal made an award in our favour, but it was not retrospective.

Were our members to be penalised because their firm was a small one? Oddly enough, this was one of the arguments used by the employer at the Tribunal—the firm was only a small one, why all the fuss? Were our members to be penalised because other firms in the trade were unorganised? What Mr. Hardy may regard as a frivolous claim might well be a burning injustice or hardship to the men or women whom it concerns.

Mr. Hardy blames the smaller trade unions for the "mixed reception" which the Tribunal has received. Is he unaware that the Trades Union Congress passed by a huge majority a resolution according the Tribunal a very dubious reception? The engineers' union is by no means a small one and yet there was recently a very large minority in favour of strike action in preference to submitting their claim to the National Arbitration Tribunal. Mr. Hardy cannot be unaware of this, as it was extensively reported in the press.

Finally, Mr. Hardy says: "If the workers themselves have not sufficient faith in themselves to organise in their trade unions and compel recognition, it is difficult to see how they are worth recognising."

It sounds very noble, but personally I find this superior attitude infuriating. Any trade union organiser will tell Mr. Hardy that the small, poorly paid type of industry is the most difficult to organise. There is no tradition in the workshops, little unity or pride of craft, the men seem terribly afraid for their jobs, miserable though they are, and trade unionism would appear to offer them no *immediate* benefits. It is difficult to take a long-term view on a paltry wage. Does Mr. Hardy think that a little compulsion on the employers would be such a *terrible* crime in this total war in which we are all in the front line, etc., etc.? ARTHUR BENNETT,
Secretary, London Optical Workers Branch,
National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers
(N.U.D.A.W.)

## THE RACIAL MYTH

SIR,—An interesting footnote to Sir R. Vansittart's (and other) generalisations on the nature of the German people is provided by the following quotation from an eminent 19th century British historian: "These people," he writes, "have a deep-rooted belief that to them it naturally belongs to lead the world and to control the policy of neighbouring states . . . they regard war, not as a sometimes necessary evil, but as a thing to be enjoyed for its own sake, a noble, perhaps the noblest, employment of human force and genius."

The interesting point is that this description is applied, not to the Germans, but to the French!

The writer continues: "The tendency of the Teutonic mind was, and is, to the independence of the individual life, to the mutual repulsion of the social atoms," and contrasts this with the "Romanic" peoples among whom "the unit tends to be absorbed in the mass." Of course, Bryce was writing in 1865, before the growth of Germany, commercially and militarily, had become a challenge to British supremacy. Circumstances, it seems, alter races. F. L. JACKMAN.

3 Grosvenor Lodge,
Tunbridge Wells.

## STATE MEDICAL SERVICE

SIR,—As one who has been for many years concerned with a Medical Service in one of the smaller London Hospitals, I would like to comment on the articles by Mr. Ritchie Calder in your last two issues.

I have no experience of the provision of Medical Services in our London shelters, and my information with regard to this is only derived from the Reports of Lord Horder and the Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health. It would certainly seem from these that the gloomy forebodings of Mr. Calder with regard to possible epidemics in these shelters have for the moment not been realised, and we can only hope that this state of affairs will continue.

I would however like to refer to Mr. Calder's criticism of the Ministry of Health in their decision that medical posts are not to be regarded as free Out-Patient Clinics. Surely this is quite sound in view of the medical services provided, not only by our London hospitals, but also by the L.C.C. Municipal Hospitals, for which Mr. Calder has such a great admiration. It is obvious it would be difficult, if not impossible, for an adequate medical service to be given in a public shelter, however well organised. Mr. Calder seems to overlook that any efficient service must provide for proper examination and diagnosis, X-Ray examination and other specialised treatment, which can only be given in special departments of an organised hospital, and under suitable conditions.

But it is when he comes to the voluntary hospitals that Mr. Calder breaks out. He says that the voluntary hospital is "an anachronism and a misnomer." I do not know what he means to imply by these epithets, but he has apparently no regard or appreciation for the magnificent services which have

for so many years been given by our voluntary hospitals and the great medical schools which have been associated with them, and from which all the medical training and knowledge of our present medical services have been obtained.

Mr. Calder seems to object for some reason to the work of the Hospital Savings Association, probably because this is admittedly a voluntary organisation, supported by the pennies of the working classes, who at all events have sufficient faith in our voluntary hospitals to believe they get full value for their money, as indeed they do. Mr. Calder apparently prefers a medical service supported by the tax and rate payers, and to which one must go willy-nilly. This is not in accordance with the traditions and history of the British people, who prefer to have a voluntary choice of their doctor and medical service when required, as in any other things.

Mr. Calder also criticises the Emergency Medical Service of the Ministry of Health, which he suggests was introduced by the Tory Government to prop up the voluntary hospitals. I do not know where he gets his data from, but I can only say from my own experience that the E.M.S. has proved fully equal to the pressure which has been put upon it by the war.

I do not know also where Mr. Calder gets the figures on which he bases his comparisons of the work done by the London voluntary hospitals with that of the L.C.C. hospitals, but I should doubt very much their accuracy. Apart from this, it seems to me that such comparisons are unnecessary and inadvisable. Both Institutions are doing great work under difficulties, and in my opinion there is room for both of them in our medical service.

It may be as Mr. Calder contends that the days of the voluntary hospitals are numbered, and in an age of State services and control, which he and others favour, they will go with the rest of our great voluntary institutions. I hope, however, that if this happens, we shall at least remember the great and permanent work which has been done by them in the past, and could well be done by them in the future, if adequate financial assistance were forthcoming.

H. S. SYRETT,
Chairman, National Temperance Hospital.
Fir Crest, Westcot,
Nr. Dorking.

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SIR,—The articles in your last two editions by Mr. Ritchie Calder seem not only to be a plea for a desirable and much overdue reorganisation of the medical services of the community, but a slanderous attack on General Practitioners and an ill-considered condemnation of the present shelter Medical Service.

I am a G.P. in a London Borough and am engaged also in visiting shelters. On the whole, G.P.s are men doing a hard job, and doing it honestly and well, with many difficulties to contend with. There are many to condemn and few to praise them, but they form the backbone of the present medical service and I think will be found to be absolutely necessary in the formation of any new communal medical service.

Mr. Calder's suggestion that the present shelter doctors "pass the patient by on the other side of the street," and are more concerned with their colleagues' fees than with the sick person in the shelter, is not only untrue but is a foul calumny that he should be ashamed to make. I can assure him that the patients seen in shelters are given the same care as others, and that the doctor has towards them the same personal responsibility as he has to all people who consult him.

The present shelter service which is so heartily condemned provides for Aid Posts equipped with common drugs, a few isolation beds, and staffed by one or two nurses, in each of the larger shelters (some of these hold less than five hundred people). In many of the smaller shelters there is a nurse. In my own borough, convenient areas have been taken over by two local G.P.s, who work on alternate weeks. Their duties are to visit each Aid Post each night, plus several of the smaller shelters, and they attend to any cases reported to them, look out for new ones, generally keep an eye on medical affairs, and give general advice where indicated. For the rest of the night they are on call for emergencies. Should they be engaged, another doctor on the rota is summoned.

Mr. Calder would have a "central clinic" for each shelter group, staffed with full-time doctors who would take over the full care of the shelterer's health, and provide systematic and continuous treatment such as is now provided by the G.P. and the hospitals.

The average shelter, however much was spent, would be quite unsuitable for the prolonged treatment of the sick. All except the very slightly sick, and all the infectious cases, must therefore be moved at the first possible opportunity. At the moment, they are moved, at their choice or the insistence of the doctor, either to hospital or to their homes, where they come under the care of their own doctor. Mr. Calder would have them removed to the "central clinic," where, unless it were equipped on the scale of a general hospital, their stay would be short and they would soon have to be moved again.

The emergency treatment of cases and the prevention of epidemics can be carried out as satisfactorily under the present scheme as under the one proposed, and the creation of the "clinics" would simply result in the overlapping of existing services and a considerable expenditure of the nation's money, with no real benefit to the shelterers. Moreover, the "clinics," being created for a temporary and artificial cross-section of the community, would probably not even have the merit, at a later date, of fitting into any new communal medical service. The present scheme has the added advantage of being flexible enough to profit by experience yet to be gained.

For these reasons I conclude that Mr. Calder's condemnation must have been due to his quite laudable desire to see a State Medical Service started; but that his judgment was warped by the distressing scenes he has witnessed in shelters. His remarks about General Practitioners I can neither condone nor forgive.

J. LISTER BOYD, L.R.C.P., M.R.C.S.
171 Seymour Place, W.1.

## 18B

SIR,—The passage in Critic's Diary about the bee keeper imprisoned under the Defence Regulations for writing cryptic notes about her Italian Queen Bee was most entertaining in its absurdity; but Mr. Kidd's letter this week suggests that it is really the Regulation that is fantastic and not the extravagances which are committed under it. It would be a pity to strain at a Queen Bee and swallow a Regulation 18B. The whole procedure reminds me of another Queen, who enraged Alice by insisting on "Sentence first; verdict afterwards!" I am referring, of course, to the *obiter dicta* in *Rex versus the Knave of Hearts* (2 Queen's Bench; Alice's Reports, edited by Lewis Carroll).

There were curious features about this case and it is perhaps its deviations from, rather than its affirmation of, accepted practice and legal precedent which have hitherto held the attention of jurisprudents. Be this as it may, at almost every point this controversial case, with its startling new practice rules, compares most favourably with the existing procedure of detention without trial under Regulation 18B.

First, the Knave of Hearts appeared in a normal Court of Law before a Judge and jurors drawn from every walk of life. Moreover, the trial was not secret; the public were admitted and appear to have followed the whole proceedings with keen interest.

Next, there was a definite indictment with fullest particulars which was widely published (for details see the Parchment Scroll which the Herald read aloud after three blasts on the trumpet).

Next, there were many witnesses called who were examined in the presence of the prisoner—and indeed most searchingly examined as to character by the Bench itself. (One, it will be remembered, was a Hatter serving a gaol sentence for larceny.)

One of the most interesting contrasts is the point on the written evidence. It will be recalled that a letter alleged by the prosecution to be incriminating was brought in. First, evidence was given as to how it was come by. Next, it was put to the prisoner, who had the fullest opportunity—which he took—of examining it and pointing out that it was a forgery. It was also scrutinised by the jury. Moreover, its meaning is exhaustively considered in open Court.

("If there is no meaning in it that saves a world of trouble, you know, as we needn't try to find any.")

These are admirable sentiments which should become a universal rule of procedure. A keen juryman asks if the incriminatory document is in the handwriting of the prisoner and is told that oddly enough it isn't. The following passage is taken verbatim from the "Notes of the evidence":

("He must have imitated somebody else's," said the King.

"Please Your Majesty," said the Knave, "I didn't write it and they can't prove that I did: there's no name signed at the end."

"If you didn't sign it," said the King, "that only makes the matter worse. You MUST have meant some mischief, or else you'd have signed your name like an honest man.")

These would appear dubious remarks from someone supposed to be acting in a judicial capacity.

Then there follows a detailed analysis of the document in dispute. This part of the procedure is marred only by a further doubtful dictum from the Bench:

("He denies it," said the King. "Leave that part out.")

It is not claimed that the procedure in *Rex versus the Knave of Hearts* was perfect, but merely that it is better than that of detentions under 18B.

Some of the prisoners under 18B do not ever appear before the Advisory Committee at all, but are released after several months' imprisonment and still do not know on whose information they have been detained, or why, and therefore are in doubt


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ROUTLEDGE

as to whether at some future date they may not be incarcerated again.

("That's very important . . . unimportant . . . important . . . unimportant . . ." said the King, as if he were trying which word sounded best.)

It is thought that from the analysis I have given above the conclusion must be drawn that the practice and procedure under Wonderland rules, marred as they are by certain prejudices of the dissenting member of the Bench, the Queen of Hearts, who was unfortunately an interested party in the case and should therefore never have been sitting, nevertheless compare favourably with the practice of detention under Regulation 18B with a hearing only by a secret non-judicial body. On the other side it can be argued that indefinite detention without trial of people of whom the Executive disapprove is no innovation but has respectable precedents. I have in mind, of course, the precedents of the Nazi concentration camps; the Italian Fascist prisons, and the Greek island prisons for political prisoners. Precedents, however, can be created as well as followed. Wonderland trials in Wonderland may seem fantastic, but when Wonderland precedents are adopted in England it is less fantastic than sinister.

Recently the process of "appeals" to the Advisory Committee have been speeded up and some people detained during the reign of Sir John Anderson have been let out. This has been welcomed in some quarters as an improvement of revolutionary proportions; actually it is a further indictment of Regulation 18B. A normal trial in a normal court of law would have rendered these "improvements" quite unnecessary.

It will be remembered that the guinea pig disturbed the trial. "Suppress him!" cried the Queen, that typical citizen who kept her head while all about her were losing theirs. Whereupon the critical guinea pig was put head downwards into a sack and sat upon, that Justice might continue. "How curious," remarked Alice. "I never understood what suppression meant until now."

Nor did I. A. M. T.

## THE BASIS OF RECONSTRUCTION

SIR,—While agreeing completely with the main tenor of the article on "Reconstruction" in your issue of January 18th, I wish to comment upon one small point.

You say: "Everyone knows that the only piece of planned development ever carried out in the central part of London—the Regent's Park–Regent Street improvement—owed its success to the fact that most of it could be carried out on land belonging to the Crown."

Surely you have overlooked one important factor: the great interest which the Prince Regent took in architectural and artistic developments? Had he not had progressive views on town-planning, he would not have commissioned Nash to plan his site, and the result might have been very different. What kind of planning would have been initiated on Crown property later in the nineteenth century, for instance? Conversely, you fail to admit that enlightened and artistically interested private landowners could, and did, have their estates well and effectively planned: for instance, the Dukes of Bedford on their Covent Garden and Thornaugh estates, Mr. Gay at Bath and the Duke of St. Albans in the Adelphi.

Is it not the taste of the owner—be he monarch or subject—which determines the effectiveness of the building? Again, Crown property was by no means State-owned property; in fact, the Government strongly objected to the Regent's schemes—at Brighton, for instance. Had he not possessed good judgment combined with an adventurous taste, the building carried out on his property would have been as haphazard as that which followed the Great Fire.

Public ownership of land is certainly one essential to-day, but also some assurance that the building commissioned shall be in the best and most effective contemporary style. M. HARRISON

15a Lyndhurst Road,
N.W.3.

## EDUCATION TO-DAY

SIR,—Your correspondent A.C.T. writes that lack of school books in reception areas is inexcusable. I agree; but here in brief is my story. In mid-September last I brought away a party of children to a village with a school of some 40 scholars. We had about 60, but were able, with a squeeze, to incorporate them all in the school, thereby avoiding the curse of the "half-time" arrangement. Furniture was inadequate, but we agreed to manage. Books, however, were impossibly short. There were complete sets of Dickens' Christmas Books, "Alice," "Treasure Island," and "Eric," all but the last of which most of our seniors knew pretty well. For the rest there were groups of up to half a dozen copies of various textbooks in English, Arithmetic, History, Geography and Science. I immediately applied to both the local and my own education authorities. By the beginning of November I had it in black and white that the home authority was responsible for the provision of textbooks. Since then I have applied again and again, have offered to go up to London and myself collect the required books from damaged schools, have named the schools at which I know the required books to be available and have given particulars of a lorry which returns empty to this area from London every fortnight. And now, in mid-January, I have a sheaf of correspondence (including one gem asking for a full inventory of all books, furniture, apparatus, consumable stock, etc., which I have received from the evacuation area!), but still no books.

I should add that my authority is one of those boroughs which A.C.T. claims are now "far in advance, educationally, of the L.C.C."

TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

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SIR,—In his article on Education in your issue of January 18th, Dr. Joad accuses the "authorities responsible for administering" the adult education regulations for failure to "show an elasticity similar" to that with which the Board of Education has adapted its requirements to the difficulties created by the Blitz. "Cases have occurred," he writes, "where recognition of" tutorial classes "has been refused in circumstances in which a reasonably generous interpretation of the regulations would have admitted them."

Dr. Joad cannot, I think, be fully aware of the facts. Under the Board of Education's rules, deduction is made from the grant payable unless a certain minimum number of students are in regular attendance at every class. In normal times the University of London (the administering authority presumably referred to by Dr. Joad) did not ordinarily approve the continuation of a class into its second or third year unless the enrolment was substantially in excess of this minimum. This margin was intended to cover losses from illness, removal and so forth. Now the Board have reduced their minimum requirements and the University, in their turn, have abolished this margin. During the present winter the continuation of every such class is approved if the enrolment of students comes up to the bare minimum figure laid down by the Board of Education. There has been no exception to this rule. BARBARA WOOTTON,

University of London, W.C.1. Director of Studies for Tutorial Classes

## RECORD WINTERS

SIR,—On reading Miss V. Sackville-West's Country Notes, in your issue of January 18th, I was surprised to come across the sentence "between 1462 and 1609 no exceptionally hard weather is recorded. Then for another hundred years, 1609 to 1708, England escaped again." Does she not consider the great frost from December 1683 to February 1684, worth mentioning? An extract from John Evelyn's Diary of January 9th, 1684, says: "I went crosse the Thames on the ice, now become so thick as to beare not only streetes of boothes, in which they roasted meate, and had divers shops of wares, quite across as in a towne, but coaches, carts and horses passed over."

Haydn's Dictionary of Dates also mentions it: "The forest trees, and even the oaks in England split by frost, most of the hollies were killed . . . and nearly all the birds perished."

Also in 1607 there is a record of fires and diversions being held on the Thames.

Duncote Hall, GWEN BARNARD
Towcester.

## OXFORD CONFERENCE

SIR,—In your contiguous paragraphs about the People's Convention and the recent National Peace Council Conference at Oxford you remark that the Conference was "altogether a smaller affair" than the Convention. As this remark may be—though quite unintentionally—a little misleading, will you allow me to say that our Conference was deliberately "a smaller affair"? It was, in fact, simply a special week-end session of the Peace Aims Conference of the National Peace Council—the standing Conference which the Council set up in September, 1939, to give representatives of organisations and individuals specially qualified to discuss these questions an opportunity for a more or less continuous examination of the problems involved in the making of a new and better order of civilisation. Incidentally, it is symptomatic of the widespread concern about these issues that an almost casual, advance reference to the Conference in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION and one or two other papers brought a shoal of applications to attend—far more than it was possible for us to accept within the limit of numbers we had purposely set ourselves.

Perhaps you would allow me to add that the addresses delivered on "Fundamental Principles and the New Order," by Dr. Herbert E. Wood, Ritchie Calder and Norman Bentwich; on "The Economic and Social Factors in International Policy," by H. J. Laski, Wilfred Wellock and P. W. Martin; and on "The Political and Constitutional Aspects of International Policy," by E. H. Carr and Señor de Madariaga, will be available shortly in three fourpenny pamphlets? The Council would welcome enquiries about these publications from readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. GERALD BAILEY

National Peace Council,
39 Victoria Street, S.W.1.

## THE GREAT DICTATOR

SIR,—The other night I saw *The Great Dictator*. I paid 2*s*. 6*d*. for a seat, and 2*s*. 6*d*. is a day's pay. Your reviewer, Mr. Whitebait, said it was an earth-shaker: in fact, he said all the superlative things which cinema managers say when they disguise advertisements as reviews in provincial evening papers and rural weeklies. If Mr. Whitebait had been working on the star system of assessment —* Fair, ** Worth a seat in front stalls, *** Must be seen, etc.—he would have given it the entire Milky Way.

It turned out to be very grandiose and very dull. Now I trust Mr. Whitebait. He writes good reviews, and I was bewildered when America's *Time* magazine said *The Great Dictator* was a very ordinary film. But Mr. Whitebait said it was a great film: he said it moved him to laughter and anger. I believed Mr. Whitebait, and he lied. Of course, American Mr. Chaplin says some comforting words about the triumph of virtue, and it's always pleasant to have neutral approval even though the B.B.C. news bulletins have plugged American opinion (as recorded by the *New York Times*) until it's all but shot away—but I didn't pay 2*s*. 6*d*. to hear America's ringside applause. Of course, Mr. Chaplin has a great reputation, but if he makes more films like *The Great Dictator* he will outlive it. Then there will be another empty niche in the American gallery of saints, and a new country can't afford to lose a Chaplin *and* a Lindbergh in a single year.

When I was a little boy in Thirsk the cinema manager used to patrol the gangways, cracking a whip to restrain our too uproarious laughter at Charlie's foolery. But since then I've seen better fools—the Marx Brothers and Donald Duck. And what a gross Californian caricature of Hitler! For six years we, too, gave Hitler the bird and Mr. Chamberlain gave him a dove—and look where it has landed us. Mr. Whitebait said he would like to have been present when members of the Government saw the film. Personally, I would prefer to sit amongst an audience of Czechs and Poles. I would like to have blissful Californian Mr. Chaplin see again his own film—during a night of Birmingham blitz.

As for Mr. Whitebait's great moment—the Hebrew barber's speech on democracy (written by Chaplin for Chaplin)—it merely embarrassed me, even though a close-up of Paulette Goddard's facile face registered the correct emotion, sentence by sentence (the intelligent woman's guide to Chaplin on democracy?). Besides, Mr. Churchill writes much more stirring prose. AC/2

[William Whitebait says "All I can say is that I went a second time to *The Great Dictator*, and enjoyed it even more than the first time—*chacun à son goût*."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

# JONATHAN CAPE

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# Current Literature

## BOOKS IN GENERAL

THIS is a war of instruments, switches, locators, detectors, indicators, measurement and mathematics, an electric war run on nerves. It has also the air of a scientific experiment which is given a human liveliness by the fact that sometimes we are the bacilli and sometimes the professor who is trying them out to see how much it takes to kill them. Over the Downs at night one is shocked to see stars. Surely they ought to have been put out? Where is the switch? And as the beams of the searchlight slide and hesitate over the face of the sky like the pointers of an engine-room dial and the air has the dry hum of aircraft, we seem to be in a powerhouse listening to the sound of dynamos. The world of 19th-century Nature has gone. Instead we live in an impersonal time—the old heroic sense of personality has gone or has become concentrated, since it cannot be dispensed with, in the persons of two or three leaders—and we have a place in a hierarchy not of value but of organisation and controls. Values have not indeed vanished but we seem to be changing over. Order and Duty are the new obligations and though in time of war these stern daughters of the voice of God tend to become hysterical, they were implicit in our life before the war and will rule it afterwards.

The decline of personality has paradoxically led to the rise of the ordinary man. In literature this was clear from the pre-war documentaries; the war has simply made more visible and dramatic a fact which was becoming apparent between the wars. Shut away from one another by the specialisation of our work—and as much by that, I sometimes think, as by class—we needed information about the lives of engine drivers, Woolworth princesses, coalminers, engineers, judges, etc., etc. And now about soldiers and what the people are doing in the war. There are three books of *rapportage* this week which examine what very ordinary people are doing.

The most interesting is *Their Finest Hour* (Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.) which is a collection of first-person and first-hand narratives of the war on land, sea and air, edited by two American journalists, Allan A. Michie and Walter Graebner. Free of the heroic and "go to it" note, each story is a plain report of personal experience from which everyday incoherence has been skilfully removed. A Spitfire pilot writes about fighting over Dunkirk, a bomber pilot describes a flight to Germany and what goes on in his aircraft during the flight, an A.F.S. man writes of the burning docks, a seaman about minesweeping, a submarine commander about sinking a ship, a girl warden about the bombing of a village. Lastly, and by far the best piece of narrative in the book, a woman from Bethnal Green describes the bombing of her home. Hers is a tragic story and so is the one about the sinking of the *Rawalpindi*; the human note is therefore deeper. This is a relief after the prosaic or excited success stories of the others who are protected or inhibited from human feeling, and above all from the expression of fear, by their absorption in their complicated technical tasks. Torpedoing a ship is an intensely interesting technical problem; on the ship that is sunk human nature breaks through:

> When I had slid down into the boat I looked up and saw the captain holding grimly on to the bridge rail. I could see that he was ordering the other officers over the side. But for their answer, at a nod from the first lieutenant, the little group seized him by the arms and plunged with him down the sloping bridge and into the water, where another boat picked them up.

Contrast this with the Spitfire pilot's ecstatic flirtations:

> When you go into it you think, What fun! When it's over you think, How bloody dangerous!

Or the well-known:

> "O, look what's coming, dearie, hordes and hordes of Messerschmitts. Nasty Messerschmitts." "Okay pal, keep them busy, I'm coming upstairs."

The Aldwych note continues through disaster:

> On the way back the first answer to my radio call said that he had got four. Then he suddenly said, "Oh hell, my engine's packed up." Then "I'm on fire." There was a silence for a second or two, then he said "Yippee! There's a destroyer downstairs. I'm baling out." A second later I heard him mutter, "But how?"

In the bomber the atmosphere seems to be more calculatedly prosaic. Arguments about football go on through the night among the smells of chewed oranges, chocolate and sardines.

But these hunters' tales have no intimacy, only the strangeness of corporate zest. It is Mrs. Hunt's story of the bombing of her house which comes closely to us not merely because we are civilians, but by the reality, the lack of strain, the private quality of its observation. Here is a piece of narrative not as trim as Defoe's, of course, and inexpert too, but with exactly his gift for homely verisimilitude. Every writer should study her story for its simplicity and completeness, the natural variety of its twists and turns.

> It seemed like nearly a minute between the thud when it fell and the roar of the explosion. . . . Then somebody in the hallway shouted "Get 'em out." And somebody else shouted, "Fire." And somebody else shouted "Keep 'em in," and a woman in the shelter was moaning and all the kids were crying.

Or:

> I remember just looking up there where the house used to be and then sort of not thinking about it any more. You know how you'll do when you've lost something or misplaced it. And you just think to yourself you'll hunt for it later on—but you don't waste time worrying about it at the time.

How closely she keeps to her real reactions and does not invent feelings which she might have thought she ought to feel:

> Then I caught a train for Dagenham to tell Mum—George's mother. I was afraid she might hear it from somebody else and be worried. I told her we've none of us got a home now. But we should be glad we've got our health. I mean that's all we've got . . . and George's job.

And she has time for a curious piece of mass-observation. She picked up a china jug absolutely sound in the ruins:

> But it wasn't mine. Somebody from the pub on the corner had put it there for a joke. You know how you're always reading in the paper about a house being bombed but a bowl of eggs in the pantry not even being cracked.

The conclusion is pathetic, decided, startling and perhaps prophetic. She's not going back to Bethnal Green Road to live. A frugal, respectable woman she had seen her pet cat blown to bits and her blue silk knickers hanging from a vestry roof. Society survives by its decencies. She's going to get a job. She wont try to set up a proper home again:

> I don't think my husband's got the heart, not now anyway. And me, I couldn't be bothered to make curtains again and do crochet and fix everything nice again. Not now.

*"What! No Morning Tea?"* (Gollancz, 4s. 6d.) is a conscript's guide to the Army, by a bright young feature-writer's diary of his first few months as a militiaman. Mr. Anthony Cotterell is a candid, self-assured and exasperating young man who must have been unbearable as an acting corporal. He was out to make a success of his training and his narrative illustrates, among other things, the tremendous advantage the middle class has in its self-possession. A good journalist, Mr. Cotterell is interested in everything and his book gets the schoolroom atmosphere of the Army; that sensation, which the shop talk of soldiers gives one, of a life almost childishly cut off from the rest of the world. It is, of course; it has sacrificed the major adult quality of independence. As a day-by-day document Mr. Cotterell's is useful and curious. What do soldiers spend? How different are the married from the single? Above all, in those hours and hours of boredom, what do they talk about? Girls, a good deal. There seems to be a behaviour pattern.

> You're seeing too much of that girl, she's no good. Why? She's getting off with me. Getcha, she wouldn't look at you, you etc., etc., etc. Oh, I'll be done with her soon then you can have her.

She's a local girl, of course, and locals are no good. Unless you're invited to her home:

> We 'ad mackerel and chips and cakes, much as I wanted. "Have some more," her old woman said. "You can eat some more, carnchew?" "Well, I'm not saying no," I said. . . . Very tasty, very sweet, I tell you.

A go-getter, Mr. Cotterell was very conscious of his authority when he got it. But why didn't he tell them to shut up, like a real corporal (one man complained), instead of all this picking on people? Mr. Cotterell's candour is good, if flashy. For some reason or other, there always seems to be only one middle-class militiaman to every 1,000 conscripts—inquiries lead me to assume this is a common rule—and I suppose he had to keep his end up in his own way. They called him Haw-Haw, sulked when he used long words, and then very kindly taught him how to use a pickaxe.

Mr. J. L. Hodson's *Through the Dark Night* (Gollancz, 12s. 6d.) is in diary form, too. Mr. Hodson is a competent novelist; now he is a war correspondent, and this is his record of the war from his time with the B.E.F. in France to the Blitz in London, with professional visits to the Air Force, Navy and industrial areas thrown in. His background is the ex-soldier's melancholy and the journalist's weakness for being carried away by his own headlines. On Tyneside he found a significant piece of wishful thinking: "The war is going to be very long." It has taken a war to give the shipyards and the miners employment. The French pages follow the whole melancholy history of last year from the impregnable Maginot phase to the last rush back. One reads a book like this not for the general story, for that would be too much like reading the newspapers twice over, but for the incidentals. There is the story of the abandoned parrot at Louvain, which I've met several times in talk with soldiers about the retreat. ("I bin thinking about that parrot. We didn't ought to have left it there. Wonder what happened to it?" Thou was not born for death, immortal bird.) Air-raid incidents: a man threw himself on the ground when bombs began to fall, but instinctively hitched up his trousers. A doctor said, after treating a group for slight shock: "Go home, rest and take it easy." They replied: "We haven't got any homes." A pilot rescued for the second time from the English Channel said: "Sorry it's me again." Talk overheard on the wireless between two English pilots during an air battle: "Keep out, don't be nosey!" and "What price this for a game of soldiers?" Mr. Hodson's experience has been wide and alarming. His book is of the profuse, meditative, but conventional kind. Its weakness is Fleet Street's tendency to work in a leading article and to make loud official asides. We get enough of that in the daily press. We want from reporters an unofficial picture of the war, the fact hidden in the cottonwool of the cliché.

V. S. PRITCHETT.

## NEW NOVELS

**The Beauty of the Dead.** By H. E. BATES. *Cape.* 7s. 6d.
**Welsh Short Stories.** Selected by GLYN JONES. *Penguin Books.* 6d.
**The Parents Left Alone.** By T. O. BEACHCROFT. *Lane.* 7s. 6d.
**The Battlers.** By KYLIE TENNANT. *Gollancz.* 9s. 6d.

Everyone who has had connections with the book trade knows that books of short stories are infallible worst-sellers. The people who come into lending libraries in search of "a nice book" almost invariably declare that they "don't like short stories." Questioned as to their reasons, they usually allege sheer mental laziness. It is too much trouble, they say, to make the acquaintance of a fresh set of characters with each story; they like a long book which they can "get into" and which demands no thought whatever after the first few pages. This explanation is perhaps valid so far as it goes, but if that were all the unpopularity of the short story might be no more than an instance of the worthlessness of majority opinion, like the almost universal preference for crumpets as against muffins. But it is a fact that people who are not afraid of mental effort also dislike short stories, that in any highbrow magazine the short story, if any, is the item one's eye skips as automatically as it skips the advertisements, and that in the nearly twenty years since Lawrence published *England my England* very little has been written in this line that has even seemed worth reprinting. Something has gone wrong with this *genre*, in which the Anglo-Saxon races once seemed to be especially gifted. It is worth trying to indicate the reasons.

I have in front of me three collections of short stories. *The Parents Left Alone* is at a lower level than the other two, but all three have the distinguishing marks that one has come to expect in any English short story that is not specifically a "thriller." The first of these is a sort of flatness and greyness, something that is perhaps best described as *low pressure*. One would expect a short story to be more lyrical and highly-coloured than a novel, just as one expects the hundred yards to be run at a faster speed than the mile, but in fact almost all contemporary short stories are remarkable for their avoidance of emotional high-lights and for being written in a deliberately "unsophisticated," oversimplified style, the "and then he went on and came to another place" manner of writing. This tiresome affectation of childishness is particularly marked in the Welsh short stories, and most of all in those translated from the Welsh. The other peculiarity of modern short stories is that nothing ever happens in them. Whatever else they are, they must never be stories. There is no vulgar "plot," no denouement, no surprise at the end. However significantly they may hint in the first page or two that some vast event is about to happen, one starts them with the same expectation of being cheated as when one goes into a sideshow at a fair. It is a certainty that the mermaid will turn out to be a stuffed dugong and the Tattooed Lady will not take all her clothes off. Nearly always the formula is the same: a pointless little sketch about fundamentally uninteresting people, written in short flat sentences and ending on a vague query. "Mrs. Whitaker parted the lace curtains above the geranium. The car was disappearing into the far distance." "'You're a good kid,' he whispered. Their lips met. But Maisie was thinking that they'd have to pawn Danny's dinner suit if the rent was to be paid this week." There seems to be a sort of cult of pointlessness and indefiniteness, quite possibly covering, in many cases, a mere inability to construct a "plot." The spirit of Katherine Mansfield


# 18th CENTURY PROPHECY

*The time will come, when thou shalt lift thine eyes*
*To watch a long-drawn battle in the skies,*
*While aged peasants, too amazed for words,*
*Stare at the flying fleets of wond'rous birds.*
*England, so long the mistress of the sea,*
*Where winds and waves confess her sovereignty,*
*Her ancient triumphs yet on high shall bear,*
*And reign, the sovereign of the conquered air.*

(*Translated from Gray's 'Luna Habitabilis', Cambridge* 1737)

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seems to brood over most short stories of the past twenty years, though her own work is almost forgotten.

But now consider for a moment the short stories, English and American, of earlier periods. Naturally everyone's list of "the best" stories would vary, but I think the following list would be accepted as a very good one: *The Premature Burial* (Poe), *A Little Dinner at Timmins's* (Thackeray), *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburgh* (Mark Twain), *Baa Baa, Black Sheep* (Kipling), *The End of the Tether* (Conrad), *A Slip Under the Microscope* (H. G. Wells), *The Dead* (James Joyce), *England my England* and *The Fox* (D. H. Lawrence), *Rain* (W. Somerset Maugham). These stories are very different from one another, but they are still more different from the neutral-tinted, eventless kind of story in which Mr. H. E. Bates excels. Of the ten tales in this list, two are wild burlesque, one a shocker, one a hair-raiser, and two are tear-jerkers. Most of them do not despise the old-fashioned "plot"—*The Fox*, for instance, has a plot that could have been used by Edgar Wallace—and some of them are too long to be printed in any contemporary magazine. Several of them ramble away from their subject in a way that would now be considered unpardonable, and all of them have a sort of gusto, an air of having been written by men who did not care whether their stories stopped at a thousand words or swelled into full-sized novels. Moreover they were all written by men who were either completely sure of their public or who took financial failure for granted, and none of them is much less than twenty years old. One can perhaps conclude that the present is an exceptionally unfortunate period for the short story. It is a form suited to more spacious times, when spirits are higher, money more plentiful, magazines fatter and leisured readers more numerous.

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Of the kind of short story that I have been unfavourably criticising, Mr. H. E. Bates is a competent producer, probably the most competent we have. You can see all his strength and weakness in the first story in his book, which is probably the best. It is about an old cabinet-maker with an artistic passion for furniture who is letting his wife die slowly of neglect on a diet of weak tea and cold rice pudding. The wife has a passion for china, to match her husband's passion for furniture. As she lies dying in her unwarmed bedroom he is downstairs at work on her coffin, and making a lovely job of it. It is his way of loving her; she understands that, and protests as strongly as he against the idea of bringing in proper medical assistance. The story ends with the woman's death and her husband's decision to line her grave with the porcelain tiles that she used to be so fond of. That is all—no story, properly speaking, only "atmosphere" and "character interest." The other pieces in the book are similar, though one, about a girl who marries a man with a wooden leg, chiefly out of pity, is somewhat more like a story than the rest. The Welsh stories are by a dozen different hands, but they are curiously alike, with the usual Welsh local colour (the corpse motif is well to the fore), except for one story by Dylan Thomas, who is only by origin a Welshman and is untinged by nationalist sentiment. Mr. Beachcroft's stories are simply an attempt to do at a "popular" level (the old lady discusses the ups and downs of life over her pint of stout, etc., etc.) the same thing as Mr. Bates does with a touch of distinction. Probably they are not worse than the contemporary average. But oh! for the days of O. Henry and W. W. Jacobs, when even the most banal story had a beginning, a middle and an end and a surprise in the last paragraph was not considered too horribly vulgar.

*The Battlers* is a very long novel about Australia, a description which makes it sound much duller than it is. Even a really bad novel about Australia might be acceptable if it gave a truthful picture of local conditions, but *The Battlers* is not a bad novel. It is clumsily written, perhaps, and spoilt in places by a feminine coyness about bad language, but it is sincere in feeling all through, and about all its subject-matter is new and extremely interesting. It is about a class of people whom hardly anyone in England can ever have heard of, the Australian rural unemployed, the families who travel to and from in ramshackle buggies and caravans, stealing sheep from the farmers and occasionally eking out their dole with odd jobs at sheep-shearing or fruit-picking. Effectively they are tramps, but, since they are in a richer and more democratic country, far less abject and poverty-stricken than their opposite numbers in England. They have many of the characteristics of nomads—the love of fighting and tendency to drunkenness, the hatred of authority and contempt for the settled agriculturist. The author claims that they represent the true Australian type and that they are coming more and more to resemble the aborigines, with whom they apparently mix and intermarry to some extent. What she unfortunately does not tell us is what proportion of the Australian population these spirited outcasts represent. But this is a novel well worth reading; were there a few more of the same quality our ignorance of the Dominions would not be so deep as it is.

GEORGE ORWELL

## THE POT AND THE KETTLE

**Paris After the Prussians.** By MAXIME DU CAMP. Trans. PHILIP A. WILKINS. *Hutchinson.* 15s.

By and large, revolutionary movements get the commentators they deserve. The Commune was essentially a small affair in which only one big man—Thiers—was involved, and he on the opposing side. The verdict of later historians on the final suppression of the Commune—that it was vile and bestial—has been unanimous; yet a balanced view of its earlier stages seems to be that the whole thing was misdirected, mismanaged, and in fact deserved to fail. Those who incite others to lay down their lives cannot afford to be ridiculous, and it is not necessary to accept Maxime Du Camp's very dubious word in order to agree that the leaders of the Commune were, for the most part if not wholly, brutal buffoons. There are few more depressing spectacles than that of high human qualities misled to ends that deform them. That Machiavelli and his disciples failed to perceive this necessary corollary is obvious: what is less often noticed is that, like all misplaced energy, heroism rendered cheap by deception or folly becomes disgusting—a festering lily; and the Unknown Soldiers of the Commune, who died so bravely for what they imagined was the French Republic and the principles of the Great Revolution, might well have thought twice before risking their lives to preserve the municipal rights of Paris. Yet they could hardly have known, for even their leaders were never really clear what it was they were fighting for; leaving it to Karl Marx to be wise after the event. Of course this bitter phenomenon is to some extent true of all wars and revolutions and should therefore form an essential part of any indictment of them; but it is generally possible to see when the Short Step has been taken, and when not. The Great War is perhaps a doubtful case; the Spanish Civil War is not, for in it the Left took up arms in defence of their own Republican form of government and laid them down fighting for the Old Man of the Kremlin who, hardly had they been defeated, hastened to shake hands with their chief enemy, Germany. The triumph of death is increased by cynicism, and though there must be many little Spanish Fascists at the moment busily engaged in writing up the Civil War in the tone of this book, I think it pretty certain that history will turn a cold eye on the followers of General Franco.

In the same way, it is impossible to read this interesting, irritating piece of special pleading without a feeling of contempt for the writer: his indignation is so obviously ignoble. A literary amateur of considerable talent, the author of a very entertaining and clever but most unscrupulous book of memoirs, the friend, moreover, of Flaubert's youth, Maxime Du Camp had seen the catastrophe of the '48 and was, by the time of the Commune, a middle-aged bourgeois of settled views. Quite apart from his four-volume indictment of the Commune (this translation is of the first volume alone) he is not a figure that inspires respect, for he was petty, touchy, vain and spoke evil with a combination of violence and levity unusual even among Frenchmen. Thus his account of the prisons of the Commune, with which this book mainly deals, makes use of a great parade of documentary accuracy to air the author's personal rancour:

> The city was a terrible sight. Infantry, cavalrymen without their horses, marines, free-lancers of every kind, volunteers of every colour, National Guards, mobiles, wandered around the streets, their hands in their pockets, their guns slung over their shoulders, completely demoralised by drink and idleness.

This kind of governessy censoriousness was not confined to the middle-aged, for Anatole France, who was years younger than Du Camp, later expressed the same sentiments; it was simply the eternal middle-class fear lest people should "forget their places." This attitude becomes doubly explicable when we learn that Du Camp himself was on the Black List and only escaped imprisonment because another man of the same name was arrested by mistake.

It is not his facts which one doubts, but the

inference he draws from them. It may well be true, for example, that the leaders' delegates had women from St. Lazare sent up to them for "examination" and then used them for another purpose; but to impugn your enemies' private morals proves nothing about his motives for being your enemy. The leaders of the Commune may have been "merely evil and inept"; but such a statement, however amply supported, could never be "the long and short of it." Complex human activities escape these superficial judgments.

It is repugnant to be obliged, on the whole, to support the opinion of a spectator whom one judges to have been right for the wrong reasons; yet such is our case here. There is a squalid atmosphere about this particular series of events: it was in no sense epic and it achieved nothing save the final abasement of Paris. Nothing fails like failure, and the history of those weeks displays a legendary muddle from which emerges that desolating hatred of Frenchmen for Frenchmen recently noticed by Mr. Peter Quennell—a phenomenon that issued at last in the débâcle of 1940. Moreover, apart from Thiers on the one side, and to a much lesser extent Rigault on the other, the figures of the Commune do not capture the imagination in any way and so refuse to be revived now. Rigault was a typical revolutionary type, with the criminal instincts of a sadistic schoolboy or a police spy; but, contrary to received opinion, bullies are not always cowards, and Rigault had more than his share of courage and dash. Thiers was no less brave, in his buttoned-up little way: his error lay in misconceiving the source of the agitation, which he took to be inspired by the International. This body, however, was at that time paralysed by the squabble between Marx and Bakunin, and was in no state to inspire anything. The Central Committee were primarily responsible for creating this fallacy in the minds of their opponents, since it was they who adopted the name "Commune," which terrified the bourgeoisie with its echoes of 1792. Yet the leaders insisted all along that they were fighting only for municipal rights—hence their references to the men of Versailles as the "Government of Seine et Oise" (as who should say just now, "the Vichy Government"). They started with plenty of advantages, including an adequate supply of arms and an initial immunity from attack; but they frittered these away until Thiers had had time to make his dispositions.

Long before this, of course, violence had set in on both sides. Now violence is not what is called an "emergent characteristic": it is always born of some one definite act, and in this case there is no doubt that that act was the shooting of Lecomte and Clément Thomas by the Communards. The latter, it will be said, were avenging the memory of the Rue Transnonain, of which Daumier's famous picture doubtless burnt in their souls, and of which piece Thiers was the villain; yet their action started the disastrous taking of hostages on both sides—the imprisonments and executions celebrated in this book—a ghastly ding-dong that could not but gather volume until it exploded in the hellish din of the final scenes. The Communards continued to make stupid and fatal mistakes: Rigault indulged in an orgy of retrospective punishments; priests and nuns—invariably the scapegoats of a revolution—were infamously treated. In this hurly-burly the most dangerous enemies of the Commune were, of course, ignored: the rich fifth-columnists went on sapping undisturbed and—as Engels pointed out bitterly—the Commune would have done better to have begun by arresting the bankers.

So the end, when the troops eventually entered the city, was savage and revolting; for the regular soldiers, goaded by the cold eyes of the Prussian army, proceeded to revenge themselves on their own countrymen for the losses and humiliations they had suffered in the recent war. It was a ruthless massacre, utterly out of proportion to the exciting cause; for while Versailles lost a bare thousand men, Paris must have lost at least twenty times as many. When one is aware of this, Maxime Du Camp's tone seems unimaginative, querulous and deprived of all generosity; but, as a vivid if one-sided picture, his book is worth attention.

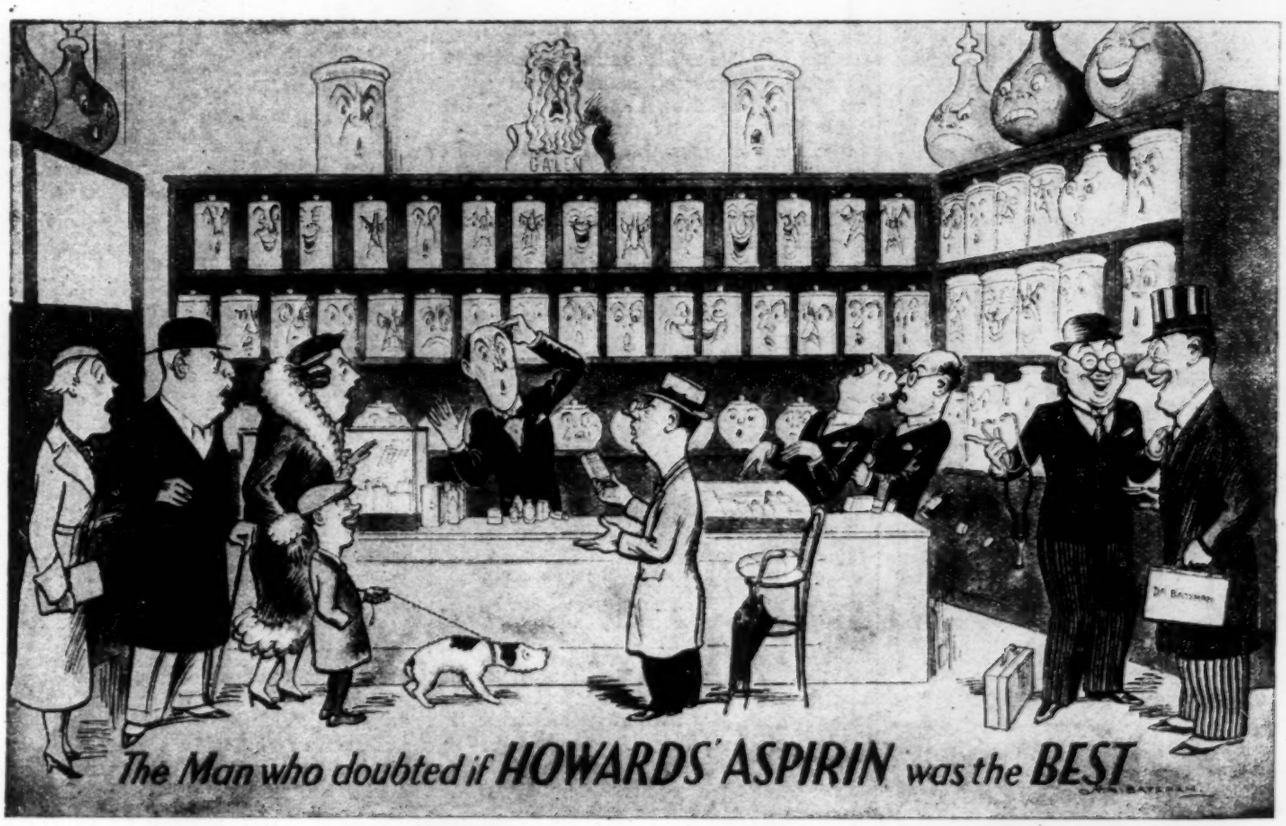
The translation is perfectly adequate.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

## AUTOCRATS AND DICTATORS

**Some English Dictators.** By MILTON WALDMAN. *Blackie.* 12s. 6d.

For his English dictators Mr. Waldman has chosen John, Henry VIII, Elizabeth and Cromwell. Of these only Cromwell is a dictator in the accepted sense of the word, nor does Mr. Waldman give any reasons why his readers should modify or expand their previous conception of a dictator. An hereditary monarch may be as able and autocratic as any dictator, but his situation is essentially different. A dictator is a self-made ruler, he emerges in chaotic times as a saviour, and has to go on saving if he wishes to keep his position. Hence he is always either at war or looking round for a new war during the brief periods of peace which even the most accomplished dictator cannot always avoid. His people must be frightened, or he will not be able to save them,



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Macclesfield

and the most convenient neighbour to attack can without much difficulty be presented as the most menacing. When, for example, Cromwell found himself involved in rapidly growing embarrassments after the execution of Charles I, he looked round for an enemy to keep his army quiet. They had expected the removal of Charles I to be followed by a millennium, and a poor man's paradise being as far off as ever, began to mutiny. Cromwell hereupon found that Ireland, a country which has never fallen upon England, was a pressing danger and took his army there, away from John Lilburne and other disturbers of his peace. After Ireland Scotland, and after Scotland a number of attempts to organise a Protestant crusade on the Continent. Europe, the religious motive for conflict having been exhausted in the Thirty Years War, proved resistant to Cromwell, whose last years were spent in scanning the horizon for a more suitable ally against the Papacy than Cardinal Mazarin, the only person able to provide him with the minimum amount of fighting necessary to his stability.

Elizabeth, on the other hand, being, in spite of occasional periods of bastardy incident to her father's tangled married life, a legitimate ruler, had no need of wars. Her subjects, as she frequently told her advisers when they pressed her to take a husband, were her children, and she wanted no others. Her situation was as different from Cromwell's or any other dictator's as that of a wealthy heiress from that of a company promoter. A company promoter may die solvent, but only because he dies in time. Had Cromwell lived to be a centenarian, it is most unlikely that his last years would have been passed in England. However long Elizabeth had lived, she would still have been the shrewd tight-fisted housewife, managing her estate with the minimum of outlay, except for some personal extravagances to which time would have accustomed all but the most churlish of her tenantry.

Mr. Waldman gives a useful and lucid account of the chief events from the accession of Henry VIII to the death of Cromwell, but he does not go very deeply into the characters of his despots. This may be due to his excessive admiration of forceful temperaments, disguised though it is under a style which owes much, though perhaps not enough, to Lytton Strachey, as, for example, in such a passage as this, which is typical of many—"If it was not sincere, it was superb histrionics. Probably the truth, obscure even to herself, was that partial sincerity heightened a natural gift of histrionics to bring off a perfect performance." What Elizabeth was like behind her histrionics, what King Hal was like behind his bluff, and Cromwell behind his religion, Mr. Waldman does not attempt to show.

HUGH KINGSMILL

## ENGLISH BAROQUE

**Country House Baroque.** By ANTHONY AYSCOUGH, M. JOURDAIN, SACHEVERELL SITWELL. *Heywood Hill.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

English plasterwork from Tudor times, right through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, even to the Pimlico-type houses of the eighteen-fifties with their efflorescent ceiling centres from which dangled the gasolier, English plasterwork was a living art. True, much of it was done by Italians, but in England and Ireland the plaster ceiling decorations are better than anywhere else in Europe.

The word "Baroque" is used in this book to cover a diversity of subjects—Kent-like work at Ditchley, a Chinese tea-party in plaster at Claydon, Bucks, and the almost medieval arrangement of a great trailing plaster vine all over the staircase walls of the Royal Fort, Bristol (1760). The last, by the way is ascribed to "Patey." There were four men called Paty working in Bristol, not plasterers but architects and stone carvers, in the eighteenth century, and the plaster work at Royal Fort is said to be by a man named Stocking. I bother to correct this slight error because Bristol plasterwork is some of the best in England and the Royal Fort, next to that at the Roman Bath House, Brislington, is the best in Bristol.

Miss Jourdain has been called in, as the stucco work authority, to add a note of scholarship to the forty-five exquisite but somewhat random photographs which are the bulk of the book. She has had a harder task than Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell who pays a well-written and moving tribute to Anthony Ayscough, to whose genius the book owes its being. Ayscough was killed in a motor accident in 1939.

I never knew him, but from studying his photographs in this book, I can appreciate what a loss he is. Picture to yourself the usual photographs in architectural or archaeological books, particularly in Government and L.C.C. publications: the sepia reproduction, the wide-angle lens, the flat and boring attempt to get everything on to the camera plate which results in fantastic distortion, the laziness of the average commercial architectural photographers, who does not bother to move a chair, or a curtain or a piece of flex which partially obscures his subject; if he does concentrate on a detail he only shows so much of it as to make one wonder what the rest is like. Alternatively he has recourse to stunt photography.

Mr. Ayscough had none of these defects. He was clearly in love with his subject. Mr. Currass, the scholar of Irish plasterwork, has told me how he would go into a room covered with plaster decoration, how he would carefully select a detail which was at once the best in the room and most characteristic of the whole. In many cases he was able to convey the rest of the design by the angle from which he took the photograph. He used light in a most subtle way so that the texture, and almost the colour of the subjects, is shown. I would particularly commend plate 26 for the reproduction of texture and use of light. It shows a low relief view of a plaster panel at Gateley Hall, Norfolk, of sheep, cows, hills, birds, windmills, trees, gates, ruins and churches. The amazing coloured ceiling of the Rotunda Hospital Chapel, Dublin (*c.*1757), plate 36, is also well selected.

One further quality, essential in an architectural photographer, Mr. Ayscough possessed. He was adventurous. No amount of locked doors, or written permissions of the agent, seem to have hindered him in getting the photograph he wanted. He even managed to penetrate the fastness of Carton (plate 29), where he has chosen a view which well conveys the whole design of frieze, cornice and ceiling.

There are many people, and I cannot blame them, who, while they admire English architecture and decoration, cannot learn about it because of the tough and technical nature of the text, in almost every case written with a strong antiquarian bias in favour of everything earlier than 1714. These people and more, I hope, who have not used their eyes before, will be helped by Mr. Ayscough's photographs, which are singularly well reproduced. The appeal to the eye in a book on architecture is worth more than a wealth of technical terms. This book does not pretend to be comprehensive, but it does a useful job well because it appeals to the eye and awakes enthusiasm.

There are other subjects which Mr. Ayscough, had he lived, might well have rescued from the uninspired photographer—English Gothic carving, tombstones, carved stonework, mural monuments and the thousands of delicate details of English craftsmanship. Perhaps some one will be found who inherits Mr. Ayscough's skill and discernment.

JOHN BETJEMAN

# WESTMINSTER BANK LTD.

## STATEMENT BY THE HON. RUPERT E. BECKETT

THE Annual Ordinary General Meeting of Westminster Bank Limited will be held at the Head Office, 41 Lothbury, E.C.2, on Wednesday, 29th January, 1941, and the procedure this year has been slightly altered. The Chairman of the Bank, The Hon. Rupert E. Beckett, has issued a Statement to Shareholders, giving, prior to the Meeting, information and comments as to the year's accounts of the Bank. This takes the place of the usual address made by the Chairman at the actual Meeting, at which the proceedings this year will be confined to the submission to Shareholders present of the customary resolutions, and to any discussion arising thereon. The main points of the Statement are as follows:

The Chairman refers first to Sir Arthur Stanley's resignation from the Board after nearly 40 years' service with Parr's Bank and later with Westminster Bank; also to the knighthood conferred in the New Year Honours List on Charles Lidbury, Director and Chief General Manager of the Bank.

### NATION'S WARTIME EXPENDITURE

The Banks, in common with every other form of national activity, have had to adapt themselves to the great changes brought about by the war in the country's economic life, which is being designedly controlled as regards both financial and productive resources to ensure the maximum war effort in every direction. This has largely influenced the course of banking, but other major changes, such as the decentralisation of business and the evacuation of large groups of the population, have also played important parts.

The dominating factor of the banking year, the Chairman continues, is to be found in the magnitude and acceleration of the nation's extraordinary wartime expenditure, which is readily seen from the following figures. During the first quarter of last year, the total Governmental expenditure averaged approximately £7 millions a day and rose in the second quarter to £7½ millions. By the third quarter it had reached an average daily figure of £10 millions, and in the last quarter £12 millions. The payments out of the Exchequer for the 16 months of war to the 31st December, 1940, total no less than £4,011 millions, which has been found as to £1,515 millions from taxation and as to £2,496 millions from net borrowing. Of this increased borrowing, £1,459 millions has been provided by a net increase of the "Floating Debt," including Ways and Means Advances, Treasury Bills and Treasury Deposit Receipts—the increase in the "Tender" Treasury Bills and Treasury Deposit Receipts being £683 millions.

In the 15 months (end August, 1939, to end November, 1940) the deposits of the Clearing Banks have increased by £437 millions, but owing to the changed methods of Clearing and the effects of postal delays, the effective increase is in the neighbourhood of £300/330 millions and at the rate of 14 per cent. upon the pre-war deposits of the Clearing Banks.

Increases in banking deposits of this magnitude and character are unwelcome: their proper home is in the form of subscriptions to the various Government loans by the persons who have the increased resources placed at their disposal by virtue of Government disbursements. The relending by the Banks to the State of the increased wartime banking deposits entirely, or even mainly, in the form of long or medium term issues has been recognised as undesirable; hence the creation of the Treasury Deposit Receipts. During the last war and commencing from March, 1915, Clearing Banks made special deposits with the Bank of England and continued to do so until the end of 1919. These special wartime deposits carried the rates of interest which were then thought appropriate, and were held at 7 days' notice and at 3 days' notice.

On this present occasion a far better system has been instituted by the Treasury to deal with the incidence of increased banking deposits. Treasury Deposit Receipts, which are non-negotiable, are issued to the Banks. They carry the low rate of interest of one and one-eighth per cent. per annum, have a normal usance of six months, and can be used by the Banks to pay for the subscriptions of their customers or those made on their own account to any public issue of H.M. Government other than Treasury Bills. They carry with them the added virtue of liquidity, as repayment can be obtained under discount at Bank Rate if the proceeds are at any time needed by a Bank for emergency use. Thus this new type of non-negotiable security provides at one and the same time a convenient and cheap means of borrowing for H.M. Government, a desirable addition to the liquidity resources of the Banks, and a method whereby the increased deposits of Banks may, upon their conversion into new issues of Government Loans, be transferred with the minimum of inconvenience.

### THE BANK'S ACCOUNTS

The effect of the impact of war upon the resources of our own Bank and upon the disposition of our assets, and the increasing degree to which our resources are being harnessed and utilised for the purposes of the national war effort are well illustrated by the figures in the Balance Sheet.

Our deposits at £410 millions show an increase of 12 per cent. on the year. The combined items of Cash, Balances with the Bank of England and with other Banks, and Cheques in course of collection on other Banks, total nearly £64 millions. Out of the remaining £346 millions, our funds employed almost directly on Government account include: Money at Call and Short Notice, Bills Discounted, Treasury Deposit Receipts, and Investments in British Government Securities, which together total £220.4 millions and represent 63 per cent. of the £346 millions already referred to. Moreover, a large and increasing proportion of our advances to customers, and indeed new advances practically without exception, provide assistance for contractors engaged on Government account, for agriculture, or for other activities vital to the war effort. It is thus evident to what great extent the resources of the Bank are employed for purposes of the Nation.

The net Profit for the past year amounts to £1,310,629, which is £165,115 less than last year's figure. This result has been achieved in a year of great vicissitudes, and can be regarded as satisfactory. It enables us to make the accustomed allocations for dividend purposes, to transfer £300,000 to Officers' Pension Fund and £100,000 to Bank Premises, as last year, and to increase the Carry Forward from £534,006 to £551,129.

### FOREIGN INTERESTS

With regard to our foreign auxiliary, Westminster Foreign Bank Limited, as a result of events in Belgium and France all its Branches are now in enemy territory within the meaning of the Trading with the Enemy Act, 1939, including even Lyons and Marseilles in unoccupied France. With one exception, all the British members of the Staff managed to escape to this country, not without thrilling experiences, but the Branches were all left in charge of an experienced and trustworthy staff of Belgian or French nationality, well able to protect our interests in so far as they may be so permitted. All the repatriated staff have, of course, been given employment with the Parent Bank. As the Branches are now all in enemy territory, or territory so regarded, up-to-date statistical information cannot be obtained from them. A very conservative policy has, however, always been followed in connection with the finance and accounts of these Branches. For many years past, profits have not been distributed, and both when war threatened and after its actual outbreak a high state of liquidity was maintained. Loans and Overdrafts were scrutinised with special care, bearing always in mind the likely effect of war upon the ability of borrowers to repay their indebtedness. This conservative policy should go far to minimise any adverse effects of the impact of war on the business.

### ULSTER BANK

The figures of our affiliate, Ulster Bank Limited, show over the year a steady increase of deposits (£22,592,542 against £21,143,766) and a decrease in lendings (£8,601,252 against £9,277,460). The trading result, at £134,616, shows a decrease of £24,682 on that for 1939, due to increased overhead charges, coupled with decreased income from lendings and lower employment rates.


**MIDLAND BANK**
LIMITED

*Chairman:*
THE RIGHT HON. R. McKENNA

*Deputy Chairmen:*
S. CHRISTOPHERSON
LEWIS H. WALTERS

*Chief General Manager:*
HERBERT A. ASTBURY

**STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**
*December 31, 1940*

| LIABILITIES | £ |
|---|---|
| Capital paid up ... ... | 15,158,621 |
| Reserve Fund ... ... | 12,410,609 |
| Current, Deposit and other Accounts ... ... | 578,663,617 |
| Acceptances and Confirmed Credits ... ... | 4,797,146 |
| Engagements ... ... | 9,351,644 |
| **ASSETS** | |
| Coin, Notes and Balances with Bank of England ... | 69,527,197 |
| Balances with, and Cheques on other Banks | 21,974,434 |
| Money at Call and Short Notice ... ... ... | 26,069,553 |
| Bills Discounted (British Treasury Bills £48,048,384) | 57,641,734 |
| Treasury Deposit Receipts | 67,500,000 |
| Investments ... ... | 156,686,506 |
| Advances & other Accounts | 188,083,067 |
| Liabilities of Customers for Acceptances, etc. ... | 14,143,790 |
| Bank Premises ... ... | 9,613,124 |
| Shares in Yorkshire Penny Bank Ltd. ... ... | 937,500 |
| Shares in Affiliated Companies: Belfast Banking Co. Ltd. The Clydesdale Bank Ltd. North of Scotland Bank Ltd. ... ... ... Midland Bank Executor and Trustee Co. Ltd. ... | 8,199,732 |

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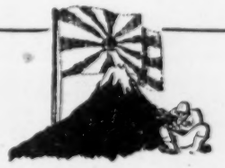

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## COURTSHIP OF BIRDS

**Courtship and Display of Birds.** By C. R. STONOR. *Country Life.* 8s. 6d.

This is a very modest book compared with other exceedingly elaborate studies devoted to birds. But it has over fifty beautiful illustrations; the Great Bustard in full display, the ecstatic posturing of the male heron with stiffened neck and throat-plumes erect, the Australian Bustard's distended, resonant throat-pouch veiled in a glittering cascade of feathers, the huge, expanded wings of the Wandering Albatross, the Amherst Pheasant in his gorgeous ruff, tilting solemnly round his mate, the amazing varieties of Birds of Paradise—these and a host of others make the book an enviable possession, apart from the many absorbing problems of bird behaviour discussed in the text. The author's chief theme is the diversity and ingenuity of methods evolved by birds to initiate the chain of events which we recognise as the breeding cycle. He draws a parallel between the stimulating effect on our emotions caused by a great work of art and the attraction and stimulus to birds of the strange beauty of courtship displays.

> But it is not only the female who is stirred up in this way; the male must also play his part in the breeding activities, and, just as an artist or a musician is even more roused by his own efforts than the onlooker, so we may suppose the bird displaying to be stimulated by his own actions quite as much as the bird he displays to.

Extremely interesting, in connection with certain Eastern dances, is the description of aggressive and warning displays in which the bird is out to make itself look as unreal and terrifying as possible. There are some interesting remarks on the combination and synchronisation of a bird's special adornments to produce the maximum effect, and on the manner in which certain birds carry their special plumes only during the short nesting season, and begin to moult into a plainer dress as soon as the courtship is over. The wonderful co-ordination of communal displays, in which each performer merges his individuality into the general pattern, is vividly described, as is the intricate platform, with painted uprights, built by the endearing Bower Bird for its play and display ground. There is an allusion to the fascinating theory that the performance of the Lyre Bird has, as it were, outgrown its function as a part of the nesting cycle, and has become almost recreational.

> How do you know but every bird that cuts the airy way
> Is an immense world of Delight, clos'd by your senses five?

Those who have spent longest in the study of bird behaviour are most likely to echo Blake's ecstatic cry.

> Evidently (says the late Eliot Howard, one of the most original of bird observers), posturing is an accompaniment of any highly nervous condition. If we ask whether each kind of reaction has a kind of posture peculiar to it we shall find it difficult to answer, because our knowledge of what any bird does is rudimentary and our perceptual powers weak.

But those perceptual powers, like all our bodily faculties, can be almost infinitely developed; and the more we rely on them the more reliable they become. The capacity to live in movement is as rare in those who have suffered a Western education as it is universal among primitive peoples. That is no doubt why ethnologists write so meagrely about dance when they deign to write about it at all. Certain descriptions of bird rituals in this book and others are more satisfying than almost any dance descriptions I have read. But even ornithologists, in their fear of identifying any bird reactions with our own, do sometimes remind one of the dreary dialectician Hui Tzu, who took Chuang Tzu to task for attributing pleasure to the minnows darting hither and thither in the stream. "You are not a fish. How do you know what gives pleasure to fish?" The last word, however, was with Chuang Tzu: "You asked me how I knew what gives pleasure to fish. But you already knew how I knew it when you asked. You knew that I knew it by standing here on the bridge at Hao." BERYL DE ZOETE

## RUNNING ON THE SPOT

**Design for a Journey.** By M. D. ANDERSON. *Cambridge University Press.* 7s. 6d.

Never probably in the history of Europe have men been so confined as we are to-day. It is not only that we cannot leave this island. That happened before, during the Napoleonic wars. It is not only that within this island travel is made cumbersome and difficult by the petrol ration and by few, expensive and overcrowded trains. Of that we got a taste during the last war. Our new and unprecedented restriction is the war in the air and its result, the black-out which, for practically all of us, means confining our outdoor activities to the hours of daylight. And these are, at the moment, so brief as to make any excursions far afield impossible unless we can make a two-days' job of them. We can no longer run about at will, we must learn to run on the spot. After sunset our cities are dead cities, every house so blacked-out as to seem deserted, and within isolated families are thrown back upon each other's company, on parlour games, the ubiquitous knitting-needles, and on the "inward eye that is the bliss of solitude."

It is for this eye that Miss Anderson caters. Memory may be bitter in these times of wholesale destruction. At least no one can cheat us of it, and if we know our country at all well there is much that is beautiful and comforting to remember. But few know the wealth of England so well as Miss Anderson, with her insatiable thirst for churches and for all the daily life of the past that is enshrined in churches. Tombs, for instance, tell us not only of the dead they commemorate but also of their living contemporaries whose imaginations wove a wreath of detail round the bare fact of a dead lord or lady. Church ornament, church windows, architectural "follies," Miss Anderson's profound knowledge of the past she loves shows us these not merely as things lovely or amusing to look at, but as revealing how the minds and imaginations of our forefathers worked. She gives companionship as well as travel. How the idea of the Tree of Jesse grew and was modified in the craftsmen's hands; how in England the Seven Deadly Sins and their Heavenly counterparts, the Virtues, departed from their classic originals of Prudentius' Psychomachia and developed homely characteristics, became recognisable English types like Shakespeare's comic *personnages*; how France and Italy influenced our artists, what they copied and what they rejected; in such slight details one can begin to understand the characters and the thoughts of our English predecessors and learn a little what they themselves were like from the works they left behind.

And although their minds worked on different lines from ours, though the stories and imagery that were then household knowledge are to-day quite forgotten, the morals drawn from them remain the same. At Salisbury, for instance, Courage is represented with a shield and spear trampling on Cowardice who cuts his own throat. De Maupassant has the same idea of Cowardice in his story of the Frenchman who committed

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# MIDLAND BANK LIMITED

## STATEMENT BY THE CHAIRMAN, THE RIGHT HON. R. McKENNA

In view of the circumstances in which the annual meeting of shareholders is to be held, on January 30th, 1941, the Chairman does not propose to follow the custom of delivering a speech. In place thereof a statement, summarised below, has been circulated to shareholders.

* * *

Our first concern at this moment is the war.

No less than 2,500 of our men are now serving in the Navy, Army and Air Force. Twenty-seven, alas, have lost their lives, and their memory will be held in honour by us all; three are missing. Six have received decorations for bravery on active service, and to them we send a special word of congratulation. Large numbers, both men and women, are engaged in various tasks of civil defence.

Despite all difficulties—damage to premises and loss of working time through air-raid warnings, travel delays and disturbance of communications—we have been able to maintain essential services to the public with scarcely more than momentary local interruptions.

### THE GROWTH OF DEPOSITS

Passing now to a consideration of the balance sheet, a record figure is shown for current, deposit and other accounts. At £577½ millions there is an increase over the year of £81 millions. Though to a small extent the rise is due to delays in clearing, we have shared to the full in the general monetary expansion corresponding to the enlarged volume of production at a higher level of prices.

The growth of deposits has led to suggestions that the banks are making large and undue profits out of what has been described as "costless credit." But for banks such a thing as costless credit does not exist. The banks pay for all deposits placed with them, partly in interest and partly in service. Of the two forms of payment the cost of service is ordinarily much the greater, and has been substantially increased of late by difficulties arising from the war. On the other hand, what the banks have been able to earn on the additional money entrusted to them is readily ascertainable from their balance sheets. To take our own as an example, if on the liabilities side we show an addition of £81 millions to deposits, we find on the assets side that coin, bank notes and balances at the Bank of England have increased by £11¾ millions; Treasury bills are up by £1¾ millions; and, under a new head, Treasury deposit receipts appear at £67½ millions. The total of these three items, £81 millions, is precisely equal to the increase in deposits. The first item, cash, brings us in nothing; Treasury bills yield one per cent.; and Treasury deposit receipts 1½. In fact on the whole £81 millions we earn rather under one per cent.—barely enough to cover the cost to us of the new deposits. With this in mind it will cause you no surprise that our profit for 1940 is much the same as for the previous year. The reduction shown is due to the higher rate of income tax. The bank has incurred no liability for excess profits tax.

Of our more profitable assets, advances and investments, advances have declined by no less than £32½ millions over the year. Ever since the beginning of the war the trend, apart from short interruptions, has been downward, notwithstanding the rise in prices, employment and production. In part, the fall in advances is a natural consequence of the shrinkage in the volume of many forms of business not essential for the war effort. Meanwhile, the flow of Government payments has been such as to limit the demands made upon the banks by undertakings working directly for war purposes; to this extent loans by the banks to the Government have replaced accommodation to private customers. Furthermore, war-time arrangements, especially in the form of official commodity controls, have tended to simplify the channels of trade by making them more direct, and have eliminated the services of intermediaries who used to borrow from the banks. The fall in advances is more than offset by the increase in investments, an increase which covers also the decline in trade bills. The new investment has been in three per cent. war loan and two-and-a-half per cent. national war bonds.

Finally, we have to record a fall in our liabilities on acceptances and confirmed credits, which is obviously due to the restrictions on overseas trade. Engagements of other kinds are roughly unchanged in amount, and the volume of forward exchange transactions has again declined.

### EXPENSES, PROFITS AND ALLOCATIONS

Current expenses have inevitably risen in some directions. We have felt it necessary, for example, in view of the higher cost of living, to introduce a system of grants-in-aid, taking the form in part of family allowances, by way of supplement to the salaries of lower-paid members of the staff. In order to ensure the maintenance of service to customers, moreover, we have had to make special and rather costly transport arrangements for a large number of our staff. Again, stationery is more expensive, and postal charges have been raised. These, along with war-time precautions, are the principal items which go to swell our general expenses.

On the other hand, such opportunities as we have had for making economies have not been neglected. We have been able to cut down expenses by closing a number of offices where this could be done without impairing reasonable service to customers, and we have also made further progress in mechanisation, which has been of special value at a time when clerical labour is difficult to obtain.

The net profit of £1,933,000 for the year, together with the balance of £642,000 brought forward, gives a total of £2,575,000 for disposal. Out of this we make an appropriation of £250,000 to contingent account for war damage to bank premises. The cost of repair or rebuilding cannot yet be accurately assessed, nor can the scale of the ultimate compensation to be received under the Government's scheme, now in its course through Parliament. Moreover, we cannot foresee what further damage may be sustained. Consequently, while the figure we have provided must not be taken as an estimate either of the damage already suffered or of the net charge that may ultimately fall upon the bank, we have chosen it as a tentative provision from the profit of the year against the possible extent of our losses.

In addition, we have allocated £250,000 to reserve for future contingencies. In disposing of our trading profit we must have regard to the need, imposed upon us by war developments, for making further provision against doubtful advances. Direct war damage to customers' premises and businesses, the evacuation of many areas and restrictions on various branches of trade have put some borrowers in difficulties which are none of their own making. In all such cases of sheer misfortune we have given the utmost assistance and consideration; but the circumstances which demand this treatment do not allow us to relax in any way our own standards of judgment as to the prospects for repayment.

There remains to be considered the final dividend for the year. We propose eight per cent. actual less tax, which, with the interim dividend already paid at the same rate, will absorb £1,455,000. This will make the total dividend for the year the same as for a number of years past. The apparent high rate of 16 per cent. has often given rise to the misconception that banks earn excessive profits. But on what is the dividend paid? It is reckoned on the paid-up capital, which by no means represents the whole capital funds in the bank owned by the shareholders. With exceptions insignificant in amount in relation to the present capital, the shares have always been issued at a premium, which has been placed to reserve. Moreover, during the hundred years and more of the bank's existence savings out of profits have been made, quite small in annual amounts, but large in the aggregate, which have led to a steady growth of the true capital funds. The yield of something over 4 per cent. on the market value of the paid-up capital more accurately represents the return the shareholder receives on his actual capital in the bank than the dividend rate of 16 per cent.

I cannot pass over without mention the temporary cutting off of our business in the Channel Islands. Happily, in the evacuation no lives were lost among the staff of the bank; moreover, we were able to remove records and valuables in such volume as to safeguard the interests of customers. We look forward to the resumption of our relations with the Islands when happier days return.

I am glad to be able to report that our affiliated institutions, in common with our own bank, have helped to the full in carrying on the essential business of the nation. Particulars of the Belfast Banking Company, The Clydesdale Bank and the North of Scotland Bank all show to how large an extent, relatively to their resources, they are assisting the war effort. The Midland Bank Executor and Trustee Company performs, on a larger scale than ever, services which have become more urgent as the perils of life have increased.

### MANAGEMENT AND STAFF

Surveying the course of our business over the past year, it is evident that the maintenance of unimpaired service to the public could not have been achieved but for the wise control and leadership of our Chief General Manager, supported by his colleagues and head office assistants and by the managers of the branches. In addition, we have enjoyed as always the co-operation of a keen and devoted staff. They have played their part with fortitude and characteristic zeal, and I am happy to say that the relations between them and the management continue to be marked by mutual understanding and loyalty. Very helpful co-operative work has been done by the Midland Bank Staff Association, an organisation entirely independent of the management and supported by the contributions of subscribing members. Those who conduct the affairs of the Association and represent it in discussions with the management are freely elected by ballot among the members. It must be remembered that bank employees, unlike those in the great majority of occupations, are ordinarily destined to spend the whole of their working career in a single institution; they have every reason to expect a pension when they reach retiring age; and they are as deeply interested in the stability of their institution as the shareholders or the customers of the bank. It follows that their interests can best be represented by colleagues who know the inside of their own bank, are provided with confidential data by the management and can take a view both larger and longer than that of the moment. At all events, it has been found from more than twenty years of experience in our own bank that our system works well, maintaining both the strength and efficiency of the bank and the welfare of the staff.

As for the immediate position, it was inevitable that the task of those who carry on the service of the bank should have been rendered more difficult by withdrawals into the forces. The gap thus created has had to be filled largely by recruiting men and women on a temporary basis—no less than 1,100 juniors and 800 women have been taken on to the staff since the war began. The recruits have to be specially trained for their duties if they are to become useful within the short time allowed by present conditions, and to this end we are operating a number of training schools in London and provincial centres.

Whatever the war may have brought in the way of hardship or inconvenience, the course of affairs in our own branch of the national effort has demonstrated the indispensability of banking service in the life of the community. When we remember how that service has been carried on under conditions of continual danger and strain, and how typical this is of the national effort as a whole, we cannot doubt the ultimate outcome of the struggle. Alike in facing the problems of war and peace, our bank, as a company of men and women loyal to their nation as to their business undertaking, will do its work with all the accumulated strength of training and tradition.

suicide rather than fight a duel, and the fate of too many European countries to-day shows how accurate this interpretation still is.

The winter just begun will bring us many evenings on which to "sit upon the floor and tell sad stories of the deaths of kings." In this unpretentious book, well illustrated with photographs, there are many such stories, and not all of them sad, to bring into our blacked-out rooms other days and other men and a taste of the great variety of life and thought and action that has made England beautiful.

FLORA GRIERSON

## DE OMNIBUS REBUS

**Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association, 1939.** *Oxford University Press.* 7s. 6d.

Whether the English Association is able to continue its labours during the present troubles I do not know: the "shop of war" has, perhaps, "too many hammers and anvils" busy. But here at any rate is Dr. Percy Simpson's collection of the work of 1939; and, as usual, it is of many kinds.

The place of honour is taken by Mr. Garrod, with an admirable essay on Housman. Regarding Mr. Garrod as one of the very best critics of our time, I read this with special interest. It may be that he weighs poets as, doubtless, he has weighed candidates in the Oxford Schools; but this, if a fault, is a fault on the right side. He judges Housman both as a human being and as a poet: he inquires into the causes of that strange misanthropy which has alienated so many people, and he appraises his poems with an admiring if somewhat academic eye. If there is such a thing as a final verdict, I believe Mr. Garrod's will stand with but the slighest modification.

Three other articles deal with very abstruse and technical matters, and experts only are really competent to judge them. Sir W. A. Craigie discusses the vexed question of the authorship of *The Kingis Quair*, deciding in favour of King James. Miss Agnes Latham, on the problem of the authenticity of Raleigh's farewell letter to his wife, brings great learning to bear; and Mr. Wrenn, studying a Medieval Manuscript, takes us into an almost unexplored region, where the traveller has to know both Welsh and English. After these, interesting as they are, the general reader will turn, in lighter moments, to Professor Tillotson on Eighteenth-century Poetic Diction—a very able and convincing defence—and to Mr. Pinto on Realism in English Poetry, where he will learn that, though the word Realism is new, the thing is old.

E. E. KELLETT

**Penguin New Writing, No. 2.** Edited by JOHN LEHMANN. 6d.

The success of the first *Penguin New Writing* has enabled the editor to enlarge its scope. Starting with this second number, it becomes a proper monthly with five regular features: a series of reports from different theatres of the war; a contribution from Rosamond Lehmann; an article, "Literature and the War," by Stephen Spender; a politico-philosophic discussion by Robert Pagan; and an episodic fantasy by Fanfarlo. Judging by this number, *Penguin New Writing* would be more than worth its sixpence for these features alone. Rosamond Lehmann's study of an invalid is sharp and poignant, an admirable story: Stephen Spender's championship of H. G. Wells is well timed. B. L. Combes writes this month's "The Way We Live Now," a report from the coalfields in wartime. But the editor's great discovery is a new comic writer in "Fanfarlo." The first instalment of "Shaving through the Blitz" suggests that a novel flavour from the direction of Kafka and Zoshchenko has appeared in English comedy. We prophesy a growing circle of Fanfarlo fans who will anxiously await fresh instalments. Apart from these, the constant features, *Penguin New Writing No. 2* includes: Igonazio Silone's "The Fox," and André Chamson's "The White Beastie," two of the most memorable stories that have appeared in *Folios of New Writing*; Ralph Bates' "The Launch" and H. T. Hopkinson's "I Have Been Drowned"; and poems by C. Day Lewis and Louis MacNeice.

**Under the Greenwood Tree or The Mellstock Quire.** By THOMAS HARDY, with Wood Engravings by CLARE LEIGHTON. *Macmillan.* 12s. 6d.

In war an increasing number of people turn to the quiet authors, to those who wrote of a stable world in which the excitements were thunderstorms, a runaway match or something wrong with the church choir or the squire's finances. We rediscover Jane Austen, Trollope and Hardy. *Under the Greenwood Tree* was first published in 1872; it is safe to say that the story of Mr. Maybold, Miss Day, Mr. Tranter and village orchestra have never been more fittingly produced or better illustrated. Miss Clare Leighton's wood engravings are now part of the Christmas season, and she is at her best in country scenes. Her small head and tailpieces reach perfection in design and technique: the full-page illustrations are rather less satisfying. The only serious criticism of Miss Leighton's work is that her art is so fully developed that it seems impossible for her to go much farther with this technique. Unless she masters some other mode she can now only repeat her successes.

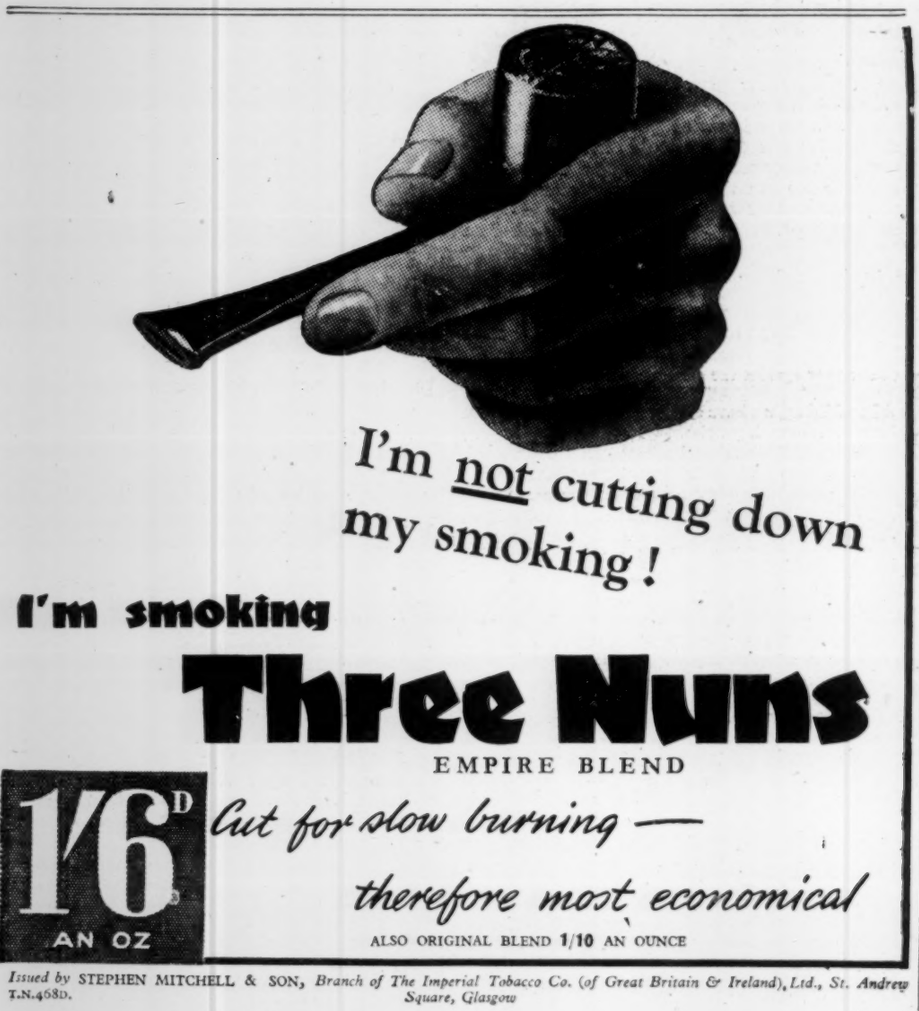
**The Diaghilev Ballet in London.** By CYRIL W. BEAUMONT. *Putnam.* 10s. 6d.

And still they come, these books on the ballet, though Mr. Beaumont, through his long association with all forms of the dancer's art, is specially qualified to record the ventures in London of the great Diaghilev. The subject is inspiring, perhaps too overwhelmingly so, unless the writer happened to be a Théophile Gautier, for who else could recapture the sumptuousness of those spectacles in which, as we now clearly see, Russian art reached its culminating glory? It is a merit of Mr. Beaumont's book that it does not attempt anything on too pretentious a literary scale. An intimate and personal memoir is what he wanted to write, and Mr. Beaumont is best when recalling details of early productions—it is amazing to see how some of the ballets have changed beyond recognition—or in recounting the piquant anecdotes peculiar to Diaghilev and his wandering troupe. There are besides excellent appraisements of Bolm, and of Nijinsky: "He did not so much as dance to the music, he appeared to issue from it. His dancing was music made visible." Nevertheless, the feeling persists that the author is essentially an historian, and his latest work, like his previous volumes, is valuable chiefly as a work of reference. The remarks on the music of the ballet, which Diaghilev recognised to be of paramount importance, are too casual and often show little understanding, as, for instance, the remark that Strauss's *Joseph* is "reminiscent of a difficult exercise in harmony." And the same degree of praise is inspired by such dissimilar scores as *Petrouchka* and *The Three-cornered Hat*. But no one can claim to speak authoritatively on all the aspects of Diaghilev's ballet—it actually aspired to be a fusion of the arts—and ballet-goers will be indebted to Mr. Beaumont for filling in many important gaps.

**Economics of Socialism.** By H. D. DICKINSON. *Oxford.* 8s. 6d.

The economic problems facing a socialist community were little understood by the "Utopian" writers; and Marx refused on principle to discuss them. But of recent years bourgeois economists, headed by Mises, have tried to make out that under socialism a rational distribution of scarce resources in accordance with consumers' choice is impossible. This attack has caused the main economic problems of socialism to be re-examined. They are now solved in outline and it has become clear that the real difficulties of socialism are administrative, political and psychological. These are not perhaps greater than under capitalism, but they are substantial and deserve further analysis.

Mr. Dickinson's book summarises well, though in a rather textbooky fashion, the results of recent economic discussion. He stresses that scarcity will persist under socialism and that it can be dealt with by pricing goods in accordance with their marginal



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# LLOYDS BANK LIMITED

## ADDRESS TO THE SHAREHOLDERS OF THE BANK BY THE CHAIRMAN, THE RT. HON. LORD WARDINGTON

IN order to shorten the formal business at the meeting to be held on January 31st, Lord Wardington's address, which in normal circumstances would have been delivered by him at the meeting, was posted to shareholders, together with the Annual Report and Balance Sheet on the 23rd instant. The following is a brief summary of the chairman's statement.

The first point to which I wish to draw your attention is the credit of £500,000 which we have placed to our published Reserve Fund. The latter will now appear at the figure of £10,000,000. You will remember that in 1931 we took from our published Reserve Fund the sum of £2,500,000 to keep in our internal funds for the protection of any depreciation of our Investments. It was always the intention to replace this amount when we felt that it was no longer likely to be required. Transfers, amounting in all to £2,000,000, have already been made in 1932, 1934, 1936 and 1937, and the balance of £500,000 has now been transferred, restoring our published Reserve to its former figure of £10,000,000. This last payment of £500,000 does not come from our profits, but it represents a transfer from our Investments Reserve Fund and leaves a substantial amount in that account, which we feel justified in believing to be more than sufficient for any probable deficiency in the future.

Our Current, Deposit and other Accounts again stand at a record figure and show an increase over last year of £57,000,000.

On the Assets side our Cash has increased by £14,400,000 and our Balances with, and Cheques in course of collection on, other Banks by £1,303,000, another sign of the times and the result of delays in postal delivery.

Our Money at Call and Short Notice has decreased by £8,000,000 and our Bills by £29,000,000, while our Investments in Government Securities have increased by £27,000,000 and in addition we have lent to the Government £65,500,000 on what is called Treasury Deposit Receipts.

The final figures for the year are not yet available, but the November figures show that of the total deposits of £2,701,000,000, £285,000,000 were kept in cash and balances at the Bank of England to meet the currency requirements of the public

£339,000,000 were represented by Bills, which, in these days, are mainly Treasury Bills and are therefore direct advances to the Government, and a further £236,000,000 have been advanced to the Government in the form of Treasury Deposit Receipts.

£140,000,000 were lent to the Money Market against Treasury Bills and British Government Bonds.

The investments of the banks amounted to £766,000,000, and probably £600,000,000 of this were in British Government securities.

Of the banks' advances to customers, £941,000,000, it may be said to-day that by far the greater part is lent for war purposes and other public needs.

Our Scottish subsidiary, The National Bank of Scotland Limited, shows a position of increased strength and usefulness, and we congratulate them and ourselves on their latest satisfactory Balance Sheet.

The net profit brought in at the figure of £1,383,807 is somewhat lower than that of last year, but I think we can congratulate ourselves that it is not lower still. When you consider the unprecedented times in which we have been living during the last year with its many extraordinary expenses, its heavily increased taxation, the serious curtailment of our usually most profitable assets, I feel that the result is better than we might have expected.

Our greatly increased investment figure has resulted in larger dividends, which helped to offset the decline in revenue earning capacity shown by some of our other assets. The income from Treasury Deposit Receipts—a new item in our Balance Sheet—also goes to counteract the loss of revenue in other respects.

I cannot conclude without saying a very special word about the staff. They have been living and working in similar conditions of danger and discomfort common to many other people, and with a readiness to put up with these hardships unsurpassed by any other body of men and women. I would like our Meeting of Shareholders to pass a very special vote of thanks for their services during one of the most trying years of our existence.

# NATIONAL PROVINCIAL BANK LIMITED

**Statement by the Chairman, COLIN FREDERICK CAMPBELL, Esq., relating to the accounts to be submitted to the 108th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING to be held at the Head Office, 15, Bishopsgate, London, E.C.2, on Thursday, 30th January, 1941.**

THE unusual course of sending the Chairman's observations on the accounts with the report and balance sheet, as at 31st December, 1940, in advance of the annual meeting, at which only the necessary business will be transacted, is introduced because so many shareholders are engaged on important Government work and others may find travelling to the City inconvenient.

### THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

There have been notable changes in a number of items in the Balance Sheet. At £380 millions Deposits show an increase of £44 millions compared with a year ago and now stand at a record high level.

The portfolio of Bills Discounted shows a reduction of £12 millions.

A new item in the Balance Sheet is Treasury Deposit Receipts, of which we hold at present £31 million.

We have augmented the Bank's Investments by no less than £38 million, practically all of which are British Government direct liabilities.

The total of the above three items amounts to £192 millions, or 50.6 per cent. of our customers' deposits, and is a complete answer to those who sometimes ask rather thoughtlessly what Banks are doing to help towards financing the war. In addition, our Money at Call and Short Notice is nearly all lent to the Market.

### ADVANCES

Our main earning asset, Advances to Customers, shows a reduction of nearly £20 million compared with 1939, and now represents only 31.3 per cent. of Deposits as against 41.4 per cent.

Owing to Government control, the accommodation to merchants in connection with the importing and holding of stocks is no longer required. Another factor is the cessation of ordinary activities in certain trades, such as building and estate development.

In addition there are the restrictions imposed by H.M. Treasury on borrowings by private individuals.

As a partial offset to these decreases we have lent substantial sums of money to those engaged in the production of armaments and to other industrialists whose businesses play an important part in our war effort. The needs of Agriculture have figured rather prominently in the public Press and special steps were taken by the Banks so that no farmer who is in any way credit-worthy could say that his farming operations had been hindered through want of financial facilities on reasonable terms.

Our branch offices in the Channel Islands have unfortunately ceased to function. We are doing all that is possible to safeguard our interests there.

As regards our holding of 50 per cent. of the capital in Lloyds and National Provincial Foreign Bank, which has carried on a business in England, France, Belgium and Switzerland for a number of years, we have no information as to the procedure now being adopted by the Germans, but the capital of the Bank is held in London in sterling. Consequently our share holding is taken at par in the Balance Sheet.

### PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT: DIVIDEND

Profit and Loss discloses a Profit of £1,697,538 which is less by £21,445 than the Profit we were able to earn in 1939. I think it will be agreed that the result is a great deal better than might well have been expected.

The dividend is at the rate of 15 per cent., being the same as for several years past. £100,000 is transferred to Premises Account and £150,000 to Pension Fund.

### BANK'S OPERATIONS AND WORK OF STAFF

A year ago I mentioned that all the Banks had agreed to co-operate in rendering mutual assistance should the need arise. The arrangements made in advance have been fully justified and we have been able to give virtually uninterrupted service to our customers.

The work of the management and staff calls for very special mention by me. The manner in which extra burdens were cheerfully assumed by one and all has been beyond praise.

We now have approximately 2,000, or about 28 per cent. of our pre-war male staff serving in the armed forces.


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cost. On more detailed questions he often throws new light. It is perhaps rather ungracious to criticise the book for what it leaves out, but Mr. Dickinson would have done well to compare his socialist system not only with *laissez-faire* and with the capitalism of to-day, with its sectional planning in the interests of producers' monopolies, but also with a system of private enterprise in which unemployment was reduced to a minimum by monetary policy and inequality of wealth by taxation. This is the best of the alternatives to socialism and a detailed comparison would help us to decide rationally on the system of the future.

# Week-end Competitions

## No. 573

**Set by V. S. Pritchett**

Passing a destroyed house the other day I overheard a man say to an Air Raid Warden, "One wonders what happens to the mice." The usual prizes are offered for the best overheard conversations concerned with the war.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, February 3rd.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

## RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 570

**Set by G. de Vavasour**

A first prize of two guineas and a second of half a guinea are offered for three additional verses to be inserted in Byron's "Vision of Judgment," introducing a character or characters of topical interest.

**Report by G. de Vavasour**

This was an attractive competition to mark. That prodigal take-it-or-leave-it manner, and the easy arrogance of the rhyming, make even mock-Byron good reading. Most of the competitors looked well in the borrowed cloak—some, by candlelight, might have passed for the Georgian Hephaestus. The staggering abundance that marks the real Byron did not, after all, come within the scope of the competition.

The entries show that God and Satan continue to understand each other very well, since Byron pointed out that "between his Darkness and his Brightness, there passed a mutual glance of great politeness"; but that "the angels are all Tories" still (verse xxvi) I am not left so certain. I liked the idea of an Alert and an All Clear sounding in Heaven for the arrival and departure of the Infernal Spirit (W. Purbrick). Among those arraigned were Laval:

God knows what we can do with such a tout!
And when God saw him coming, God went out.
(J. W. F. Hurford)

Haw Haw, of whom the Devil remarks:

If he's brought in, my crowd will kick up Hell!
(W. H. Victory)

Churchill (favourably), Goebbels, and (oddly) Masefield and Culbertson. Towanbucket tells neatly how the Devil refused Quisling. A. Morgan Young disposes of the whole human race:

So Homo Sapiens, by himself destroyed,
Left Peter gazing on a world made void.

But the majority of the entrants were Dictator-phobes. The target, of course, is large, and a miss is difficult. Byron to-day might have written of —— and —— and ——, but the Hitler and Mussolini entries came nearest to the pungency of the original. Of the Mussolinis, David Freeman was the best. In his poem all the great Italians rise as witnesses unbidden: "murdered Matteoti," countrymen and others who had fallen in Libya, Spain and Abyssinia, the great men of art and letters:

But I detected, I'm ashamed to tell ye,
Some trace of sympathy in Machiavelli.

I. R. I. S. began happily:

A minor friend led in the strangest figure
Who clearly from the looseness of his breeches
Must once have been considerably bigger;
(He was obliged to keep 'em up by hitches)

The Hitler entries, on the whole, showed most invention. The claim to Heaven as a German colony was a popular theme:

"This is the very last, the ultimate,
Of my claims territorial!" he stormed.
"Heaven a German colony must be—
Protected from aggression's threat by me."
(M. K. Gunning)

There was a general fear of fifth-columnry in Heaven—too well justified in Harry Broadbent's winning entry. The non-Aryanism of St. Peter came in for frequent comment. Five entries seemed to me of prize-winning standard. I recommend that the first prize be divided between Harry Broadbent (for ingenuity) and Charles Furbank (for wit and subtlety) and that the second prize go to Miss R. Maxwell. Space forbids the printing of two excellent runners-up by Pibwob and David Freeman.

But who now comes in lily-laden car
Alone, and drawn by six tall flaxen maids?
Whose potent eye, commanding from afar,
Glares thus athwart these fair celestial glades?
Saint Peter trembles at the heavenly bar,
And his dark face grows lighter—several shades:
Hitler has come to seek abounding grace,
The deadliest enemy of Peter's race!

"Rat!" quoth the saint, "No entry have you here:
Away, and dull your bright triumphant eye,
Ere these true guards shall jangle round your ear!—
He took his keys and brandished them on high—
"To Hell with you in flight headlong and sheer!"
Hitler moved not and Michael drew anigh,
And flung his shining robe from off his back
To stand, clad in a uniform of black!

"Heil, Hitler!" cried the angel, "All is won;
Mein fuhrer is the lord of heaven and earth:
And now that our Fifth Column work is done,
Let us purge Heaven of those of Jewish birth!
Heil, Hitler!" And forthwith he had begun
To cast out Peter from his ancient berth,
But that his master bade him quell his din
And ope the Gates, that he might go within.
(HARRY BROADBENT)

A FURTHER VISION OF JUDGMENT

Another died, his mother called him Neville,
His father did the same upon Hell's floor.
Our hero started back and cried "the Devil!"
Though incorrect 'twas nearer than before,
When he mistook the biggest rogue in Seville
For a great gentleman. Enough! No more.
He called for Whips and thundered "He's a No;
My lobby's Yes, I'll never share with Joe."

The Whips who answered him, alas to state,
Were ungenteel and of antique variety,
Whose flaming truncheons soundly drubbed his pate,
Till he was heard to speak with impropriety,
Demanding of the Devil why of late
He'd let such vulgar — into society?
The Devil answered, "Those barbarians?
They're perfect gentlemen—and Aryians!"

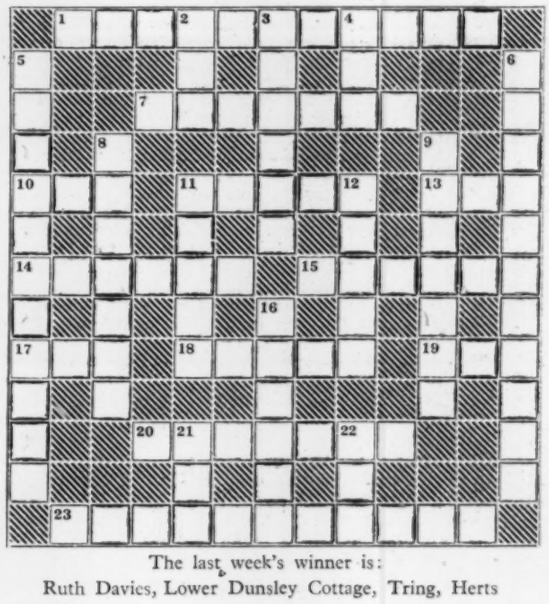
But he produced such testimonials
From Bishops, Ministers, religious Jews,
Debenture-holders, Kings and rank Colonials,
The Devil bowed and had to change his views,
But swore from Brum to Hell the only calls
Were from the manufacturers of screws.—
No wonder then that Stanley B. should fear age
Quite lacking Neville's sub-celestial peerage.
(CHARLES FURBANK)

Just then a hubbub at the gate arose;
At first the elbowing ghosts could only see
A turnspit, one of Satan's train, whose nose
Sniffed heaven's frankincense in impish glee.
"This man's plane," said the child, "flew high and froze.
He says he's God. He begged a tow of me."
"Go back and baste that Scotch fellow, you brat!
(Odd, my Prime Ministers don't run to fat)."

Said Lucifer. "Good saints, what is *this* vision?
Not Chaplin, is it? The moustache looks right."
"I'm God," bawled the newcomer, "and my mission
(Since trodden worms on earth begin to bite)
In Aryanising heaven will find fruition.
The God you've had so far's an Israelite."
And shrieking a "Heil, Hitler!" the intruder
Addressed Saint Michael as his "lieber Bruder."

Saint Peter bustled fuming towards the door,
Where that two-handed engine stands, which he
And Milton know the make of; but before
It smote, the saints and patriarchs like a sea
Swept the blasphemer out. "By this uproar,
I take it, you don't want him. Nor do We,"
Said Satan. So in interstellar air
He hangs, haranguing a stray comet there.
(MISS R. MAXWELL)

## WEEK-END CROSSWORD 16 *Set by* V. S.



The last week's winner is:
Ruth Davies, Lower Dunsley Cottage, Tring, Herts

ACROSS

1. Leaves home and registration book behind? (4 and 7)
7. Replace 38. (7)
10. Give The French A Piece Of Greenland In Real Earnest. (3)
11. He left the reader to supply his own conclusion. (5)
13 *rev.* and 17. Jump with all your weight on the piano. (6)
14. Chaff Hitler into immediate surrender? (6)
15. He takes life too easily. (6)
17. See 13 *rev.*, though it's not quite nice. (3)
18. Subject of thought for the parent. (5)
19. Bit of a nobody though turned 21. (3)
20. There's no getting out of it—I am done for. (7)
23. Artist's model for *Madame Butterfly*. (7 and 4)

DOWN

2. See 22 *rev.*
3. Is nothing to stop an imaginary line being drawn? (6)
4. He has no heart for gardening. (3)
5. Infant prodigy? (5 and 6)
6. Talk about holding a share in rolling stock. (11)
8. He may have 23 for father to bury. (7)
9. Over 200 yards does not sound like a short cut. (7)
11. It's all rot taking an outsize. (5)
12 *rev.* A river imbecile. (5)
16. What have they done to me, dear? (6)
21. Mentally deficient by all account. (3)
22 *rev.* and 2. Inculcates cutting down school uniforms? (6)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

# THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By URBANUS

THE BANKS' PROFITS — THE RECOVERY IN SHARE PRICES — TIN CONTROL

THIS week the joint stock bank chairmen will begin to deliver their annual addresses to shareholders. They will naturally counter the Socialist idea that banks are profiteering institutions by pointing to the decline last year in their net profits and the huge sums they have paid in taxation. Actually, increased taxation was responsible for most of last year's apparent decline in bank net earnings. The important fact is that the gross profits of the "Big Five" banks in 1940 amounted to no less than £13 millions. Now banking is as necessary a public service as sewage or water or the telephone. It is much more of a public utility than electricity or gas because there is no choice before the trader: he cannot exist without the use of a national banking service. Then why should it be operated for profit at all? Surely it is a function which the State should assume and operate, like the Post Office, on a cost basis. Mr. McKenna, Chairman of the Midland Bank, was at pains to prove that there was no such thing as "costless credit" out of which the banks made large and undue profits, but he cannot explain away the £13 millions excess over costs which the banks made as profits last year. The same argument applies, of course, with even greater force to the Bank of England. No one really knows, how much actual profit the Bank of England makes, but its 12 per cent. dividend is regarded as a "gilt-edged" rate, and Bank of England stock at 342 is valued on a yield basis of 3½ per cent. Joint stock bank shares, however, are not regarded with such settled favour. Some partly paid shares, such as National Provincial Bank £5 shares £1 paid, return a yield of over 5 per cent. Is this because the market allows the possibility of the Government one day deciding to turn banking into a national utility service operated without profit to shareholders?

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The sharp recovery in ordinary shares is not difficult to explain. It has nothing to do with the war news or the weather or the telephone service, which are all very mixed. It is due entirely to the coincidence of the announcement of the new requisitioning of American securities and the payment for those requisitioned in the previous Treasury order. Both events took place last week. If the Treasury, as I suspect, does not like to see British industrial ordinary running away from the gilt-edged market, it should be more careful in future to time its announcements of, and payments for, these requisitionings differently, so that there is a time lag between the two. Or it should make payment in Savings Bonds. Of course, money which had been invested in speculative American equities is not likely to be reinvested permanently in British Government stocks, with little prospect of a rise but with some prospect of a considerable fall on de-control. Nevertheless, I wonder whether the private investors or the investment trust managers are wise to chase our leading industrial equities at this stage of the war. They know that these equities provide no hedge against inflation with Excess Profits Tax at 100 per cent. and income tax at 8*s.* 6*d.* They must be aware that when manufacturing concerns turn from their peacetime business to contract work for the Ministry of Supply or the Ministry of Aircraft Production they are turning from a relatively high ratio of profit to a relatively meagre 10 per cent. or less on cost. And they should be mindful of the narrowness of existing markets on the Stock Exchange, which implies that if the war news became bad for a period, equity share prices would fall as rapidly as they have risen.

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Tin control is under discussion. The American purchase agreement, which necessitated a quota of 130 per cent., comes to an end on June 30th, and the International Restriction Scheme on December 31st. If the American purchases for war stocks are to be discontinued or reduced materially on June 30th, the quota will, of course, have to be brought down, but no country would wish to see the control of the International Tin Committee altogether removed. The main complaint comes from Malaya, whose producers are dissatisfied under their quota. Although the Malayan quota has been adjusted in recent years, it is still based on tonnages fixed at the beginning of restriction some nine years ago. The Malayan producers, whose output capacity has been largely increased, plead that their quota should be increased at the expense of Nigeria, which has invariably failed to live up to its quota. A complication is the building of a large tin smelter in the United States and the American agreement with Bolivian producers for the supply of ore. If natural quotas are to be revised, some attention must be paid to Thailand and French Indo-China, which are playing strangely unexpected parts in the tin control scheme. I expect to see tin restriction continued but revised and the quota lowered. This is not exactly the time to buy tin shares.


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